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# **POPE'S ESSAY ON MAN**



# Essay on Man

Epistles I-IV

By  
Alexander Pope

*WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY*

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## INTRODUCTION.

### I. AUTHOR'S LIFE.

ALEXANDER POPE was born in London on May 21, 1688, the year of the Revolution that finally dismissed the Stuarts from the English throne. His father was a linen merchant, whose place of business was in Lombard Street in the city, a street more famous for its association with banks than with poetry. In the poem in which Pope gives us most autobiographical details, the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* (also called the *Prologue to the Satires*), he tells us that

“Of gentle blood (part shed in honour's cause,  
While yet in Britain honour had applause)  
Each parent sprung.”

There is no reason to deny this statement because his father was in trade, in spite of the illiberal way in which trade was then viewed. Whilst the son was yet young, the father, having made at least a competency for himself, retired from business, and bought a country house at Binfield, not far from Windsor Forest. Both parents

were Roman Catholics, and the event of the year of Pope's birth may be said to have proved fatal to the cause of the Roman Catholics in England. As a Catholic Pope could not go to one of the public schools, and he never received the drilling in the classical languages that he might have obtained there. It is said that Pope taught himself to write by copying print, and throughout his life his small fine hand-writing bore traces of its origin. Pope received his early education from a priest, to whom his father had given an asylum, and who repaid the kindness by teaching the little boy the rudiments of Latin and Greek. The young Pope was afterwards sent in turn to two small Catholic schools; but as Catholic schools they were not likely to be flourishing, and they seem to have been very bad. It is said that he left his first school for fleshing his youthful satire on the master, and, if the story be true, it is a characteristic beginning. His school-days were over by the time that he was twelve, from which early age the poet carried on his own education. He says that he took to reading by himself "with very great eagerness and enthusiasm, especially for poetry. In a few years I had dipped into a very great number of the English, French, Italian, Latin, and Greek poets." This would be a capital training for a poet, but, unfortunately, the statement must be qualified. Voltaire, who personally knew Pope, declared that he could hardly speak or read a word of French: but the latter statement must surely be exaggerated. Pope's knowledge of Italian also was limited, and not like that of Milton. He certainly was never a scholar in the strict sense of the word, but he could translate the 'classical' authors in a way to gather their sense

without paying much attention to the refinements or niceties of their language.

A sickly child, Pope grew up deformed, and so short as to be almost a dwarf. Throughout his whole life he suffered a great deal from illness, especially severe headaches. An undercurrent of unhappiness caused by his bodily ailments, and a nervous irritability, which is not uncommon with very short men, can be traced through all his life. Unable to engage in the sports of boyhood, he showed poetical talent at a very early age.

“Why did I write? What sin to me unknown,  
Dipt me in my ink,—my parents’, or my own?  
As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,  
I lisp’d in numbers, for the numbers came.”

In the poetical phraseology of the time, the word “numbers” was used for poetry in imitation of the Latin *numeri*.

“I left no calling for this idle trade,  
No duty broke, no father disobey’d.  
The muse but serv’d to ease some friend, not wife,  
To help me through this long disease, my life.”

This last pathetic statement should always be borne in mind by all who deal with the biography of Pope. Poets have been described as a “*genus irritabile*,” but Pope had physical reasons for his irritability. Asthma, in itself partly a disease of the nerves, was one form of his illness; ultimately dropsy was superadded.

Pope never married. After his father’s death, his mother living with him, he took up his residence at a villa, which he purchased at Twickenham, a place on the Thames, about twenty miles above London,\* if the wind-

ings of the river be followed, and a shorter distance by a straight road. This villa at "Twitnam," as Pope preferred to call the place, was to the poet a constant delight. He took a keen interest in "the purest of all human pleasures," gardening; and the remains of the quaint grotto which he caused to be constructed underneath a high road still exist. Here Pope was visited by the most eminent men of the day, politicians or men of letters. He was proud to boast of his friendly intercourse with Lord Bolingbroke—the St. John to whom the *Essay on Man* is dedicated, as well as the assistance that Peterborough, the brilliant but erratic general, gave him in gardening.

"There my retreat the best companions grace,  
Chiefs out of war, and statesmen out of place.  
There St. John mingles with my friendly bowl  
The feast of reason and the flow of soul.  
And he, whose lightning pierced the Iberian lines,  
Now forms my quincunx, and now ranks my vines,  
Or tames the genius of the stubborn plain,  
Almost as quickly as he conquered Spain."

Probably no "statesman out of place" ever had nobler eulogy passed upon him than that with which Pope honoured Harley, Lord Oxford:

"A soul supreme in each hard instance tried,  
Above all pain, all passion, and all pride,  
The rage of power, the blast of public breath,  
The lust of lucre, and the dread of death."

Pope was a good friend, but one of the most endearing points about him was his strong affection for his mother. [See iv. 110:] On her monument he called her *mater*

*optima, mulierum amantissima.* With genuine feeling he seems to have written these tender lines :

“ Me let the tender office long engage  
To rock the cradle of reposing age,  
With lenient arts extend a mother’s breath,  
Make languor smile, and soothe the bed of death,  
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,  
And keep awhile one parent from the sky.”

After his mother’s death he seems to have been more and more miserable as his diseases increased upon him, until he died on May 30, 1744, an eminent man of letters but never a happy man. He was then fifty-six.

## II. POPE’S POETRY.

In the last year of the seventeenth century, Pope, aged twelve years old, was, at his own express desire, taken up to London in order to see Dryden, the reigning poet, for whom, as a convert to the Roman Catholic religion, Pope’s family had naturally a special affection. It was at Will’s Coffee-house that the meeting took place, and it is to be hoped that Dryden appreciated the boy’s enthusiasm. Dryden died in that very year ; and it may well be said that his mantle and a double portion of his spirit fell upon Pope, who did not wait long before entering upon his poetical inheritance. The following are Pope’s most famous works, given in the order in which they were composed and published : *Essay on Criticism*, *Rape of the Lock*, *The Messiah*, *Translation of Homer’s Iliad*, *Translation of part of Homer’s Odyssey*, *The Dunciad*, *Essay on Man*, *Imitations of Horace*.

The *Essay on Criticism* may be described as written in imitation of the *Ars Poetica* of Horace, but there is this difference between the writers—Horace was an experienced and practised poet, Pope a young man of twenty-three when his poem was published. If the palm for originality be awarded to Horace, honour must also be given to the genius of the young poet, which enabled him to utter thoughts worthy of the matured wisdom of age. Many of the commonest quotations of modern life are culled from the *Essay on Criticism*.

“A little learning is a dangerous thing ;  
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.”

“To err, is human ; to forgive, divine.”

Perhaps the most extraordinary feature about Pope's early poetry is that it is as good, or almost as good, as that which he wrote when he was much older. There is the same harmony in the metre, the same polish in the language. It can hardly be maintained that added years brought with them any marked increase of power, of melody, or of taste.

The *Rape of the Lock* is a playful poem, mock heroic. It has been called the true epic of the Age of Anne, which was in many ways an artificial time. A young cavalier of the court cut a lock of hair from off the head of a beautiful maid of honour. The lady was naturally incensed, and Pope wrote this poem with a view to restoring peace. The place that the gods occupy in ancient epic poems, Pope supplies in this airy pleasantry with a whole system of sylphs and gnomes, and the subject is treated in so graceful a style that the poem may serve as a model for this species of composition. It is itself

partly an imitation of a poem by Boileau, called *Le Lutrin*, "the lectern," but it is generally acknowledged that Pope's is the better, if it be not the most charming poem of the kind in any language.

The *Messiah* is a sacred eclogue written in imitation of Virgil's *Pollio*, as the fourth of his eclogues is called. It has often interested critics to note the strange points of resemblance between the *Pollio* and some of the prophecies of Isaiah. Some writers even go so far as to say that Virgil may have been acquainted with the prophetic portions of the Bible in an indirect manner through Jews who had settled in Rome. In the *Messiah*—which is one of the most beautiful of Pope's shorter poems, the language of Isaiah is intentionally grafted on the language of Virgil, and thus a higher and Christian application has been given to a poem written in honour of the Consul Pollio's little boy.

On Pope's *Homer*—perhaps his best known, his longest, but hardly his greatest work—his contemporary, Bentley, the most eminent classical critic of his time, passed a criticism to which even now it is difficult to add. "A pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but please don't call it *Homer*."

It begins :

"Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring  
Of countless evils, heavenly goddess, sing."

The sonorous roll of the original hexameters, the natural freedom of the early poet have vanished, and have been replaced by the stiffness of an artificial style. The problem of translation is better understood now. Pope was not a finished Greek scholar, and thoroughly to understand the work to be translated is the first need of



a translator. But if Pope's translation does not reproduce Homer, it is well worth reading for its own sake. It enjoyed an extraordinary popularity for the greater part of a century, during which time many boys learnt the story of the Fall of Troy from Pope, and when older remembered with pleasure its polished couplets. The translation was published by subscription and brought the poet a large sum of money, so that in an age of patronage he was able to boast—

“Thanks to Homer, whilst I live and thrive,  
Indebted to no prince or peer alive.”

Pope's greatest admirers do not claim originality amongst his merits. A large portion of his poems is made up of translations and imitations. Perhaps it would have been more suitable if Pope could have changed places with Dryden, and employed his smooth style as the translator of Virgil rather than of Homer. But amongst ancient writers his affinity is with Horace. In the careless cynicism of the Roman writer, as in the epigrams and polish of his verse, we may find a likeness to Pope, who, besides the imitation in the *Essay on Criticism*, paraphrased several of the satires and epistles and adapted them to the Age of the two first Georges. There is much to remind us of Horace even in the *Dunciad*, a biting satire upon the dull writers, the Dunces of Pope's day. The poet attacks Dulness, as represented by his own contemporaries, especially by such as had offended him. Some parts of the *Dunciad* are parodies; others are full of burning indignation. This spirit of indignation only occasionally appears in the *Satires*, the attack upon Lord Hervey under the

name of "Sporus" being especially savage. Sometimes the satire is more stinging by being wrapt in a studious moderation, as in the attack on his former friend Addison, veiled under the name of "Atticus."

The merits of Pope's poetry are not originality nor sympathy with nature, virtues which distinguish greater poets, but grace, smoothness, correctness, the perfection of poetic taste. Pope pays infinite attention to the form of his verses, making the subject-matter a secondary consideration. His lines remind one of the exquisite chiselling of a master-sculptor, and the result of this is that, after Shakspeare, he has contributed more quotations to our everyday language than perhaps any other poet. He belongs to an artificial school, which has been called Classical and has been called French. It has certainly been greatly influenced by the Classics as studied from a particular point of view, as well as by the French writers of the Age of Louis XIV. The predominant element in Pope's poetry is due to the conscious following of advice which he received from a critic of eminence when he was young—"Be a *correct* poet." The confession made by Pope that he aimed at carrying out this advice has naturally stimulated the critics as a challenge to find instances where he is incorrect. Few poets have been more carped at: the search for faults sometimes going so far as to object to ellipses, and to require the same fulness of statement in terse verse that can be expected in prose. The greatest poets, however, aim at something far more important than correctness, even if that be attainable: and it must be allowed that Pope does not belong to the first order of the world's poets, its eternal masters of har-

monious song. But that order is not large, and neither the world nor English Literature can afford to exclude from the list of poets those who only belong to the second order, those who return to an Age its own thoughts melodiously expressed in verse. Pope holds the mirror up, not to nature, but to the society of a particular epoch.<sup>1</sup> In fact, one of our greatest critics, Matthew Arnold, was inclined altogether to deny the name of poet to Dryden and to Pope. Unable, however, to deny their power and their importance in literature, he calls them the "high-priests of an age of prose." But as Poetry, like Wisdom, is justified of all her children, it seems better not to refuse these high-priests the time-honoured name of poet.

There is no doubt that Pope, from earliest years to latest, revered Dryden and acknowledged him as his master. Dr. Johnson compares Pope's prose to that of Dryden in language which may be applied also to their poems: "The style of Dryden is capricious and varied, that of Pope is cautious and uniform; Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid, Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller."

Pope's influence upon English poetry may be said to have lasted until nearly the end of the eighteenth

<sup>1</sup> We are to regard Dryden as the puissant and glorious founder, Pope as the splendid high-priest of our age of prose and reason. For the purposes of their mission and destiny their poetry, like their prose, is admirable (*Ward's English Poets*, Introduction, p. xxxviii.).

century, and it cannot be regarded as beneficial. Poetry consists of two parts—the outward form and the inward meaning. Some writers have neglected one and some the other. The absence of heart and of nature from a great deal of the poetry of the coming time seems to be due to imitation of Pope; and those poets who did the most to bring back simplicity and truth instead of artificiality, and to develop the love of nature, protested against the influence of Pope. Cowper complains that he

“Made poetry a mere mechanic art,  
And every warbler has his tune by heart.”

Wordsworth said that in description Pope never had his eye upon his subject. In *Sleep and Poetry* Keats attacks him as one of the handicraftsmen who wore the mask of Poesy.

### III. THE “ESSAY ON MAN.”

The *Essay on Man* the author declares to have been written as part of a much larger scheme, others of the poems entitled *Moral Essays* being intended to be woven into it, until the whole should be about four times its present bulk. The *Essay on Man* was given to the world in parts: the first epistle published at first anonymously in 1732, and the last in 1734. Pope lived for ten years after the last date, and, therefore, want of time could not be pleaded as his reason for abandoning his design.

The summaries prefixed to each of the epistles are by the author himself. It may be worth while here to

extract from them a brief account of the matter of the poems. The subject of the first Epistle is man with respect to the universe; of the second, with respect to himself as an individual; of the third, with respect to society; and of the fourth, with respect to happiness. In the first Epistle the poet argues that we can only reason from the known to the unknown. We only know a small portion of the universe, but we can see that there is in the universe a scale of beings. It is the pride of man that regards the universe as made for his benefit. Man must absolutely submit to Providence, must allow that, even if he cannot see it, the Divine order is perfect. The second Epistle's motto is its second line :

“The proper study of mankind is man.”

In man himself there is a balance which makes for order, a balance between the two principles of self-love and reason. In man's very imperfections the ends of Providence are attained. The third Epistle continues the argument, that the general good is the object of the Divine government. This is illustrated by the operation of reason and of the instinct of animals; instinct produces society, whilst reason carries it further. The different kinds of societies are next shown to arise from the same principle. Self-love and social love are the same. The fourth Epistle, which completes the *Essay on Man* as it now stands, though not as it was designed to stand, is concerned with questions about happiness, the end and aim of man. God meant happiness for all, and therefore made it depend on general laws. It does not consist in external goods, such as wealth, honour,

fame, which are unequally divided. Hope and fear maintain the balance of happiness. God cannot alter general laws to suit individuals. The good may at times suffer, yet the good are the happiest. Virtue only, and virtue held in due submission to Providence, is happiness. At the conclusion of the whole poem, Pope gives his own brief summary of the four Epistles thus :

Shew'd erring pride, whatever is, is right—1st.  
That reason, passion, answer one great aim—2nd.  
That true self-love and social are the same—3rd.  
That virtue only makes our bliss below—4th.

It has been denied that the thoughts contained in Pope's *Essay on Man* are his own. They are said to have been supplied by Lord Bolingbroke. There is a discussion on this subject in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, which took place some forty-five years after the publication of the *Essay*, when Pope and Bolingbroke, and even Lord Bathurst, who lived to be over ninety, had passed away. Lord Bathurst is the authority for the statement. Boswell read a letter from a friend who described a dinner at Lord Bathurst's, when the latter was nearly an octogenarian, at which the conversation turned on Pope, and attention was particularly drawn to the old man's testimony. "Lord Bathurst told us that the *Essay on Man* was originally composed by Lord Bolingbroke in prose, and that Mr. Pope did no more than put it into verse ; that he had read Lord Bolingbroke's manuscript in his own handwriting, and remembered well that he was at a loss whether most to admire the elegance of Lord Bolingbroke's prose or the beauty

of Mr. Pope's verse." On hearing this, Dr. Johnson made reply : " Depend upon it, sir, this is too strongly stated. Pope may have had from Bolingbroke the philosophic *stamina* of his Essay ; and, admitting this to be true, Lord Bathurst did not intentionally falsify. But the thing is not true in the latitude that your friend seems to imagine ; we are sure that the poetical imagery, which makes a great part of the poem, was Pope's own."<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt, however, that what Johnson calls the "philosophic stamina," the matter of the Essay as opposed to its form, the framework of the poem, was due to Bolingbroke, who not only suggested to Pope the subject, but supplied him with arguments either in writing, or, as is perhaps more likely, in conversation. Pope says as much in the concluding lines of the poem where, having called Bolingbroke "my friend, my genius," or again "my guide, philosopher, and friend," he adds that he was "urged" by him. Pope's contribution is the art of the poem, the wonderful compression of the language, the poetical imagery, the illustrations borrowed often from many sources, but exquisitely fitted to make the meaning clear. This part of the work is not open to much censure, though occasionally the language is over-compressed,—with the natural result prophesied by Horace : "Brevis esse laboro Obscurus fio."

That is probably the limit of the objection to Pope's art. On the side of the subject-matter much greater objection to the *Essay on Man* can be, and has often been raised. The optimism of the doctrine, "whatever is, is right," was very soon seen to be open to criticism, which was supplied from an unexpected quarter. Vol-

<sup>1</sup> Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, vol. vii., pp. 284-5.

taire, at one time a great admirer of the poem, became upon reflection an opponent of this its essential doctrine. The earthquake of Lisbon, which took place in 1759, seems to have roused Voltaire to treat the question—Is, then, this earthquake, this frightful calamity suddenly overwhelming more than 50,000 people, right? He put the question seriously in a philosophical poem on the *Earthquake of Lisbon*; he put it with mockery and irony in his liveliest and brightest tale, *Candide*. In the poem he seriously discusses "the riddle of the painful earth," and a translation of two lines may be quoted as its final teaching:

"One day all will be well, such is our hope.  
All is well here below:—this is illusion."

On the principle that a jest may hit him who a sermon flies, *Candide* is intended to give a grotesque view of the same argument, and the "best of all possible worlds" is held up in it to ceaseless ridicule.

It was very soon also seen that the view of the universe adopted in the poem was pantheistic, though it is uncertain how far Pope, the Roman Catholic, held consciously what was certainly a part of Bolingbroke's creed. Pope has been accused of not understanding Bolingbroke, and not seeing the drift of the arguments that he used. When Pope was attacked for heterodoxy, he resented the imputation, and was proportionately delighted when Warburton came forward to defend him.<sup>1</sup> It is believed that Warburton did not at first

<sup>1</sup> An American critic (E. P. Whipple), speaking of Ben Jonson, says that had his wish to be a clergyman "been gratified, he would probably have blustered his way to a



intend his defence of the orthodoxy of the *Essay on Man* to be taken seriously,—that he wrote it as a paradox and an exercise of ingenuity ; but when he found how Pope viewed the matter, and how he welcomed his new champion, then Warburton accepted the situation, became Pope's intimate friend, and, in a sort, his literary executor. Pope's introductions to friends in high place, it may be added, led ultimately to Warburton obtaining his bishopric.

It is a question whether poetry is a proper vehicle for a philosophical or religious discussion, a question not easy to decide in the negative by a generation that regards Tennyson and Browning as its leading poets. But however the general question be decided, it is certain that the *Essay on Man* is not a good philosophical poem : it is not a consistent whole, but it is a collection of admirable sayings, some of which touch philosophy and religion, according to the Latin saying, with a needle. Few poems contain more epigrammatic aphorisms ; and poetry of a certain kind—the kind that dominated the eighteenth century is excellently represented in it.

The following passage may be quoted from one of Pope's biographers, W. J. Courthope, to show the extraordinary vogue which the *Essay on Man* once had [p. 250] :

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bishopric, and proved himself one of the most arrogant, learned, and pugnacious disputants of the English Church Militant,—perhaps have furnished the type of that peculiar religionist, compounded of bully, pedant, and bigot, whom Warburton was afterwards, from the lack of models, compelled to originate" (*Literature of Age of Elizabeth*, p. 88). Bolingbroke called Warburton "the most impudent man living."

"The very failure of the 'Essay' in respect of philosophy brings into stronger relief its remarkable merits as a poem. On this point the opinion of the world in general coincides with that of the learned. It is one of the few English poems that have obtained a world-wide reputation. It has been translated into most European languages. There are, in the catalogue of the British Museum, seven translations into French verse, and one into French prose, coming down to 1864; five into German, coming down to 1874; five into Italian, coming down into 1856; two into Portuguese; one into Polish; two Polyglot; two into Latin verse. Wieland and Voltaire have written poems in imitation of it. Voltaire calls it 'the most beautiful, the most useful, the most sublime, didactic poem that has ever been written in any language.' Marmontel says: 'Pope has shown how high poetry can soar on the wings of philosophy.' Dugald Stewart declares 'The *Essay on Man* is the noblest specimen of philosophical poetry which our language affords; and, with the exception of a very few passages, contains a valuable summary of all that human reason has been able hitherto to advance in justification of the moral government of God.' Immanuel Kant used to quote from it frequently in illustration of his lectures."

#### IV. HENRY ST. JOHN, LORD BOLINGBROKE.

Henry St. John, afterwards Viscount Bolingbroke was a famous statesman and writer on political and philosophical subjects of the early part of the eighteenth

century. As he was intimate with Pope, who (iv. 390) calls him "guide, philosopher, and friend," and as he was in some degree the inspirer of the *Essay on Man*, it may be well to give a full account of him.

1. *Early Years*.—He was born at Battersea, now a part of London, then perhaps better described as a suburb higher up the River Thames. The family of St. John was ancient and prosperous. The mother was a Puritan, and seems to have compelled the boy to read long, wearisome sermons, a process of which, in after years, he had no pleasant recollections. He was educated at Eton and at Christ Church, Oxford. Coming of age the year before the end of the century, he was first returned to Parliament in the year 1700.

2. *Political Life*.—In spite of this early bias from his mother, or perhaps by the law of contradiction as the result of it, Henry St. John appeared in the political world as a Tory and a High Churchman, and, young as he was, very soon became a prominent member of the party. In four years he was made Secretary at War in a ministry in which both sides were represented, almost the last ministry in which an attempt was made to combine the two parties. It was the ministry which supported the war usually called that of the Spanish Succession,—the war of the Grand Alliance against Louis XIV., at the time of Marlborough's great victories. But the interest taken in this war by the Tories was never so strong as that of their opponents, and after four years, the Whigs and supporters of the war claiming all the places, Harley was turned out of office and St. John followed him. Then followed the famous intrigues connected with the

name of Mrs. Masham, and in 1710 Harley came back into office, bringing St. John with him. These two ministers resolved to put an end to the great war. Their resolution could not immediately be carried out, but its ultimate result was the treaty of Utrecht, by which England gained very little of all that she had been fighting for. The completion of this treaty ended the agreement of the two ministers, and the brief remainder of the Queen's reign was filled with intrigues, with the object of ousting Harley, who had now received the title of Earl of Oxford, in order to make St. John, now Viscount Bolingbroke, chief minister in his place. Bolingbroke's ambition might be considered sufficient reason for such intrigue without assigning it to his vanity, because he had received a lower rank in the peerage. The real reason was, that the extreme section of the party, the Jacobites, did not trust Harley, and thought Bolingbroke more likely to help the restoration of the Pretender. Their wish was but half carried out, Oxford was turned out of office, but before Bolingbroke was appointed his successor the Queen became very ill and died.

3. *Exile.*—In the new reign Bolingbroke had no chance of further office. George I. appointed all his ministers from the Whigs, and even before arrival in England sent directions that Bolingbroke should be removed from office. The order was executed, it is said, even with rudeness. Fearing a threatened prosecution, the late minister fled to France, and in his absence he was attainted of high treason. At Paris he offered his services to the Pretender, and was for some time regarded as his chief adviser. The rebellion of

1715 was, however, undertaken contrary to Bolingbroke's advice, and, ever high-spirited, he would not long have remained in a position where his advice was not followed; but James, knowing this, dismissed him.

4. *After exile.*—In 1723 Bolingbroke returned to his native land. He first received the king's pardon, which secured the safety of his person. Two years later, an Act was passed reversing the attainder, and giving him back his estates and property. But he was never able to regain his rights as a peer. According to his own expression he was thus "two-thirds restored." It was at this time that Bolingbroke lived on terms of cordial intimacy with Pope, and became his "guide, philosopher, and friend." After living for some years not far from Pope's house at Twickenham, Bolingbroke, on his father's death, settled at Battersea, where he died. During the latter period of his life Bolingbroke would gladly have made his peace with the House of Hanover and returned to political life, but as he could not procure the complete reversal of his attainder he was not able. Literature gained the energy that would otherwise have been devoted to politics. His most important writings are the *Idea of a Patriot King*, and the *Letters on the Study and Use of History*. The language and style are beautiful: in the matter there is often an air of insincerity.

V. LANGUAGE, AND PRONUNCIATION AS SHOWN BY  
RHYMES.

There are not many points in which the English of Pope's time varies from the English of to-day. In a few instances words have changed their meanings, and a note is required to point out this change to the beginner. In ii. 14 'abuse' means to deceive, not to insult; in ii. 44 'pride' means splendour, not vanity; in iii. 9 'plastic' has its proper meaning—able to mould, and not its modern meaning of easily moulded. But these changes in language are very few, and certainly more changes of the sort came in English between Shakspeare and Pope than between Pope and Tennyson. There have been changes also in spelling. Where Pope spelt a word differently, it hardly seems worth while to preserve his spelling, especially where it is wrong, as in 'lawrel' (iv. 11); but his method of shortening the past participles by the omission of the silent letter *e*, and his way of marking by an apostrophe the omission of vowels that his metrical use requires should not be sounded [*e.g.* 'op'ning' (iv. 9), 'gen'ral' (iv. 36)] have been carefully preserved.

Greater interest attaches to the question of Pope's pronunciation. The correctness of his rhymes has often been impugned in cases where his pronunciation has been perfectly consistent. Unless we can believe that "correct" Pope accepted the ridiculous doctrine of "rhymes to the eye," a study of Pope's rhymes shows us that the pronunciation of certain diphthongs and vowels has changed. 'Vice' must have been sounded in a French fashion to rhyme with 'caprice' (ii. 239),\* and

'race' (i. 209) to rhyme with 'grass.' Certainly *oi* was different; 'join,' for instance, had the pronunciation which now we regard as extremely vulgar—'jine.' In i. 227 it rhymes with 'line'; in ii. 203, 'join'd,' with 'mind.' That the present pronunciation of the last word was also the old is shown by Johnson's remark on the short and now usual pronunciation of wind: "I cannot find it in my mind to call it wind." No doubt there was no false rhyme between 'enjoy' and 'luxury' in iii. 61, and in iv. 13 'toil' and 'soil' were read as 'tile' and 'sile.'

The greatest change, however, has come in the sound of *ea*, and it was coming during the middle of the eighteenth century. In 1732, Pope seems uniformly to have adopted what would now be thought an Irish pronunciation of that diphthong. In 1747, Johnson issued his "Plan for a Dictionary of the English Language"; and a quarter of a century later he said to Boswell that on that occasion "Lord Chesterfield told me that the word *great* should be pronounced so as to rhyme to *state*; and Sir William Yonge sent me word that it should be pronounced so as to rhyme to *seat*, and that none but an Irishman would pronounce it *grait*. Now here were two men of the highest rank,—the one the best speaker in the House of Lords, the other the best speaker in the House of Commons,—differing entirely."<sup>1</sup> Sir William's jeer at the Irishman is a little misplaced, for in this word the ordinary pronunciation is quite with the Irish manner. Indeed we may even go so far as to say that it looks as if the Irishman has simply preserved the older method of pronouncing the diphthong. Swift

<sup>1</sup> Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, vol. iii., p. 191.

by his rhyme shows that he pronounced 'flea' like 'flay.' The old pronunciation of 'tea' gives it the same sound as the German *Thee* and the French *thé*, both probably borrowed from English.

"Here thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey,  
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes Tea."  
—*Rape of the Lock*, 296.

It is not, perhaps, so well recognized that Cowper adopted the same sound for 'sea' in the Olney Hymns (1779):

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform,  
He plants his footsteps on the sea  
And rides upon the storm."

The other verses in the hymn all rhyme first and third, as well as second and fourth.

If Pope uniformly adopted this sound for *ea*, it will require that the *e* and *ei* also should often have what we may call an Irish sound,—*e.g.* 'complete' and 'receive' as 'complate' and 'recaive.'

Elwin says that Pope in this Epistle, the fourth, has made 'great' rhyme to both sounds. At 219 it rhymes with 'cheat,' and at iv. 287 with 'complete.' Both these words are now pronounced *eet*, and formerly were *ate*.

In a note on *Essay on Criticism*, 661, where 'extreme' rhymes with 'phlegm,' Mr. T. Arnold says:—"Phlegm seems to have been pronounced at this time *fleme*, not, as now, *flem*," and he quotes Swift's rhyme 'supreme and 'phlegm.' Rather in all three words the sound was *-ame*.

So in i. 211 'beam' rhymes with 'extreme,' probably



= *ame*. At i. 285 'bear' rhymes with 'sphere,' but the latter word at ii. 23 rhymes with 'fair,' and at i. 73 with 'there.' At iv. 15 'ev'rywhere' rhymes with 'sincere,' which had the same sound as 'fair.' In iv. 244 'dead' rhymes with 'shade,' and must have been pronounced 'dade.' 'Weak' must have been 'wake' to rhyme with 'take' in iv. 227. 'Bears' rhymes with 'appears' in i. 185, which must have therefore been 'appares.' At ii. 185 'appear' rhymes with 'fear'; but probably the old sound of each was different—'appare' and 'fare.' Perhaps the most remarkable case is iv. 320, 'tears' (*lacrimæ*) rhyming with 'wears.'

In the following cases there is *ea* in both rhymes, so that they do not help the argument:—'tread' and 'head,' i. 259; 'least' and 'beast,' iii. 23; 'please' and 'ease,' ii. 169; 'increase' and 'peace,' iv. 55; and in 'ease' and 'these,' iv. 21, 273, the sound of diphthong and single vowel have both changed.

On the other hand, that a shorter pronunciation must have been sometimes given to *ea*, as in 'tread' and 'head,' (rhyming i. 259), when followed by consonants, is shown by these instances:—'feast' and 'blest,' iv. 381; 'beast' and 'rest,' ii. 8; 'meant' and 'content,' iv. 65; 'breast' and 'imprest,' v. 125.

There has been a change of pronunciation in 'food' and 'blood,' i. 83, each of which formerly rhymed with our modern 'good.' Probably 'cowl' and 'fool' was a good rhyme, iv. 199, though now a very bad one. But all Pope's rhymes cannot be defended on the ground of change in the pronunciation. 'God' could not have rhymed with 'abode,' i. 125, with 'wood,' iii. 155, and with 'road,' iv. 331; and the following defective

rhymes may also be noted—'here' and 'refer,' i. 19; 'above' and 'Jove,' i. 41; 'plain' and 'man,' i. 47; 'know' and 'now,' i. 93; 'mourns' and 'burns,' i. 277; 'return' and 'born,' iii. 19; 'come' and 'tomb,' iii. 161.

Occasionally in the poem, Pope allows his language to descend far below its usual standard, as iv. 373, 'come along'; iv. 204, 'leather or prunella'; iv. 223, 'ne'er looks forward further than his nose'; iv. 277, 'so silly.' Warton calls these passages "disgusting," but in the last century that word had not its present strong meaning, but simply meant "contrary to good taste."

Lastly, a word as to the metre. It is known as the heroic couplet. There are ten syllables in each line with the accent on every second syllable. Very seldom is there an eleventh syllable added—always unaccented, but there are cases of this variation of which Shakspeare makes such admirable use, *e.g.* iv. 203 and 215. Each pair of lines rhymes, and as a rule is distinct in construction and sense from the lines that follow it. In Pope's hands this metre, which has now sunk to being the vehicle of prize poems, and of hardly any other poetry, reached its highest perfection. It is the only metre of which Pope is really a master, and as long as his vogue lasted it was almost the only metre that was ever used. Its danger is that of becoming monotonous and mechanical.



# AN ESSAY ON MAN:

IN FOUR EPISTLES TO

HENRY ST. JOHN, LORD BOLINGBROKE.

## THE DESIGN.

HAVING proposed to write some pieces on human life and manners, such as (to use my Lord Bacon's expression) *came home to men's business and bosoms*, I thought it more satisfactory to begin with considering Man in the abstract, his nature and his state; since, to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what condition and relation it is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpose of its being.

The science of human nature is, like all other sciences, reduced to a few clear points. There are not many certain truths in this world. It is therefore in the anatomy of the mind as in that of the body; more good will accrue to mankind by attending to the large, open, and perceptible parts, than by studying too much such finer nerves and vessels, the conformations and uses of which will for ever escape our observation. The disputes are all upon these last, and I will venture to say, they have less sharpened the wits than the hearts of men against each other, and

have diminished the practice, more than advanced the theory of morality. If I could flatter myself that this Essay has any merit, it is in steering betwixt the extremes of doctrines seemingly opposite, in passing over terms utterly unintelligible, and in forming a temperate yet not inconsistent, and a short yet not imperfect, system of ethics.

This I might have done in prose ; but I chose verse, and even rhyme, for two reasons. The one will appear obvious ; that principles, maxims, or precepts so written, both strike the reader more strongly at first, and are more easily retained by him afterwards. The other may seem odd, but it is true ; I found I could express them more shortly this way than in prose itself ; and nothing is more certain, than that much of the force as well as grace of arguments or instructions depends on their conciseness. I was unable to treat this part of my subject more in detail, without becoming dry and tedious ; or more poetically, without sacrificing perspicuity to ornament, without wandering from the precision, or breaking the chain of reasoning. If any man can unite all these without any diminution of any of them, I freely confess he will compass a thing above my capacity.

What is now published, is only to be considered as a general map of Man, marking out no more than the greater parts, their extent, their limits, and their connection, but leaving the particular to be more fully delineated in the charts which are to follow. Consequently, these Epistles in their progress (if I have health and leisure to make any progress) will be less dry, and more susceptible of poetical ornament. I am here only opening the fountains, and clearing the passage. To deduce the rivers, to follow them in their course, and to observe their effects, may be a task more agreeable.

# EPISTLE I.

## ARGUMENT.

*Of the nature and state of man with respect to the universe.*

Of Man in the abstract.—I. That we can judge only with regard to our own system, being ignorant of the relation of systems and things, 17. II. That man is not to be deemed imperfect, but a being suited to his place and rank in the creation, agreeable to the general order of things, and conformable to ends and relations to him unknown, 35. III. That it is partly upon his ignorance of future events, and partly upon the hope of a future state, that all his happiness in the present depends, 77. IV. The pride of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more perfection, the cause of man's error and misery. The impiety of putting himself in the place of God, and judging of the fitness or unfitness, perfection or imperfection, justice or injustice, of His dispensations, 113. V. The absurdity of conceiting himself the final cause of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world, which is not in the natural, 131. VI. The unreasonableness of his complaints against Providence, while on the one hand he demands the perfections of the angels, and on the other the bodily qualifications of the brutes, though, to possess any of the sensitive faculties in a higher degree, would render him miserable, 173. VII. That throughout the whole visible world, an universal order and gradation in the sensual and mental faculties is observed, which causes a subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to man. The gradations of sense, instinct, thought, reflection, reason; that reason alone counter-  
vails all the other faculties, 207. VIII. How much further this order and subordination of living creatures may extend, above and below us; were any part of which broken, not that part only, but the whole connected creation must be destroyed, 233. IX. The extravagance, madness, and pride of such a desire, 259. X. The consequence of all, the absolute submission due to Providence, both as to our present and future state, 281.

## EPISTLE I.

AWAKE, my St. John ! leave all meaner things  
To low ambition, and the pride of kings.  
Let us (since life can little more supply  
Than just to look about us, and to die,)  
Expatriate free o'er all this scene of man ;  
A mighty maze ! but not without a plan ;  
A wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot ;  
Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.  
Together let us beat this ample field,  
Try what the open, what the covert yield ;                   10  
The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore  
Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar ;  
Eye nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,  
And catch the manners living as they rise,  
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can ;  
But vindicate the ways of God to man.  
Say first, of God above, or man below,  
What can we reason, but from what we know ?  
Of man, what see we but his station here,  
From which to reason, or to which refer ?                   20  
Thro' worlds unnumber'd tho' the God be known,  
'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.  
He, who thro' vast immensity can pierce,  
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,

Observe how system into system runs,  
 What other planets circle other suns,  
 What varied being peoples every star,  
 May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are.  
 But of this frame the bearings and the ties,  
 The strong connections, nice dependencies, 30  
 Gradations just, has thy pervading soul  
 Look'd thro' ? or can a part contain the whole ?

Is the great chain, that draws all to agree,  
 And drawn supports, upheld by God or thee ?  
 Presumptuous man ! the reason wouldst thou find,  
 Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind ?  
 First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,  
 Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less ?  
 Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made  
 Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade ? 40  
 Or ask of yonder argent fields above,  
 Why Jove's Satellites are less than Jove ?

Of systems possible, if 'tis confest  
 That wisdom infinite must form the best,  
 Where all must full or not coherent be,  
 And all that rises, rise in due degree ;  
 Then, in the scale of reas'ning life, 'tis plain,  
 There must be, somewhere, such a rank as man :  
 And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)  
 Is only this, if God has plac'd him wrong ? 50

Respecting man whatever wrong we call,  
 May, must be right, as relative to all.  
 In human works, tho' labour'd on with pain,  
 A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain ;  
 In God's, one single can its end produce ;  
 Yet serves to second too some other use.  
 So man, who here seems principal alone,  
 Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,  
 Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal ;  
 'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole. 60



When the proud steed shall know why man restrains  
His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains ;  
When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,  
Is now a victim, and now Egypt's god :  
Then shall man's pride and dulness comprehend  
His actions', passions', being's, use and end ;  
Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd ; and why  
This hour a slave, the next a deity.

Then say not man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault ;  
Say rather, man's as perfect as he ought : 70  
His knowledge measur'd to his state and place,  
His time a moment, and a point his space.  
If to be perfect in a certain sphere,  
What matter, soon or late, or here or there ?  
The blest to-day is as completely so,  
As who began a thousand years ago.

Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of fate,  
All but the page prescrib'd, their present state :  
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know :  
Or who could suffer being here below ? 80  
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,  
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play ?  
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,  
And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.  
Oh blindness to the future ! kindly giv'n,  
That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n :  
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,  
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,  
Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,  
And now a bubble burst, and now a world. 90

Hope humbly then ; with trembling pinions soar ;  
Wait the great teacher death, and God adore.  
What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,  
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.  
Hope springs eternal in the human breast :  
Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest :

The soul, uneasy and confin'd from home,  
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo, the poor Indian ! whose untutor'd mind  
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind ; 100  
His soul proud science never taught to stray  
Far as the solar walk, or milky way ;  
Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,  
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n ;  
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,  
Some happier island in the wat'ry waste,  
Where slaves once more their native land behold,  
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.  
To Be, contents his natural desire,  
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire ; 110  
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,  
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

Go, wiser thou ! and in thy scale of sense,  
Weigh thy opinion against Providence ;  
Call imperfection what thou fancy'st such,  
Say, Here he gives too little, there too much :  
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,  
Yet cry, If man's unhappy, God's unjust ;  
If man alone ingross not Heav'n's high care,  
Alone made perfect here, immortal there : 120  
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,  
Re-judge his justice, be the god of God.  
In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies ;  
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.  
Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,  
Men would be angels, angels would be gods.  
Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell,  
Aspiring to be angels, men rebel :  
And who but wishes to invert the laws  
Of order, sins against th' Eternal Cause. 130

Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,  
Earth for whose use ? pride answers, 'Tis for mine :

For me kind nature wakes her genial pow'r,  
 Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r;  
 Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew  
 The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;  
 For me the mine a thousand treasures brings;  
 For me health gushes from a thousand springs;  
 Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;  
 My foot-stool earth, my canopy the skies.' 140

But errs not nature from this gracious end,  
 From burning suns when livid deaths descend,  
 When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep  
 Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?  
 'No ('tis reply'd) the first Almighty Cause  
 Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws;  
 Th' exceptions few; some change since all began;  
 And what created perfect?'—Why then man?  
 If the great end be human happiness,  
 Then nature deviates; and can man do less? 150  
 As much that end a constant course requires  
 Of show'rs and sun-shine, as of man's desires;  
 As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,  
 As men for ever temp'rate, calm, and wise.  
 If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's design,  
 Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline?  
 Who knows but He, whose hand the light'ning forms,  
 Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the storms;  
 Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind, 159  
 Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?  
 From pride, from pride our very reas'ning springs;  
 Account for moral as for nat'ral things:  
 Why charge we heaven in those, in these acquit?  
 In both to reason right is to submit.

Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,  
 Were there all harmony, all virtue here;  
 That never air or ocean felt the wind,  
 That never passion discompos'd the mind.

But all subsists by elemental strife ;  
And passions are the elements of life. 170  
The gen'ral order, since the whole began,  
Is kept in nature, and is kept in man.

What would this man? Now upward will he soar,  
And little less than angel, would be more ;  
Now looking downwards, just as griev'd appears  
To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.  
Made for his use all creatures if he call,  
Say what their use, had he the pow'rs of all ;  
Nature to these, without profusion, kind,  
The proper organs, proper pow'rs assign'd ; 180  
Each seeming want compensated of course,  
Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force ;  
All in exact proportion to the state ;  
Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.  
Each beast, each insect, happy in its own :  
Is Heav'n unkind to man, and man alone ?  
Shall he alone, whom rational we call,  
Be pleas'd with nothing, if not blest with all ?

The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)  
Is not to act or think beyond mankind ; 190  
No pow'rs of body, or of soul to share,  
But what his nature and his state can bear.  
Why has not man a microscopic eye ?  
For this plain reason, man is not a fly.  
Say what the use, were finer optics giv'n,  
T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n ?  
Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,  
To smart and agonize at ev'ry pore ?  
Or, quick effluvia darting thro' the brain,  
Die of a rose in aromatic pain ? 200  
If nature thunder'd in his op'ning ears,  
And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,  
How would he wish that Heav'n had left him still  
The whisp'ring zephyr, and the purling rill ?

Who finds not Providence all good and wise,  
Alike in what it gives, and what denies ?

Far as creation's ample range extends,  
The scale of sensual, mental pow'rs ascends :  
Mark how it mounts to man's imperial race,  
From the green myriads in the peopled grass :   210  
What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,  
The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam :  
Of smell, the headlong lioness between,  
And hound sagacious on the tainted green :  
Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood,  
To that which warbles through the vernal wood ?  
The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine !  
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line :  
In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true  
From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew ?   220  
How instinct varies in the grov'ling swine,  
Compar'd, half reas'ning elephant, with thine !  
'Twixt that, and reason, what a nice barrier ?  
For ever sep'rate, yet for ever near !  
Remembrance and reflection how allied ;  
What thin partitions sense from thought divide ?  
And middle natures, how they long to join,  
Yet never pass th' insuperable line !  
Without this just gradation, could they be  
Subjected, these to those, or all to thee ?   230  
The pow'rs of all subdu'd by thee alone,  
Is not thy reason all these pow'rs in one ?

See, thro' this air, this ocean, and this earth,  
All matter quick, and bursting into birth.  
Above, how high progressive life may go !  
Around, how wide ! how deep extend below !  
Vast chain of being ! which from God began,  
Natures æthereal, human, angel, man,  
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,  
No glass can reach ; from infinite to thee.   240

From thee to nothing. On superior pow'rs  
Were we to press, inferior might on ours ;  
Or in the full creation leave a void,  
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd :  
From Nature's chain whatever link you strike,  
Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.

And, if each system in gradation roll  
Alike essential to th' amazing whole,  
The least confusion but in one, not all  
That system only, but the whole must fall. 250  
Let earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,  
Planets and suns run lawless thro' the sky ;  
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,  
Being on being wreck'd, and world on world ;  
Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod,  
And nature tremble to the throne of God.  
All this dread order break—for whom ? for thee ?  
Vile worm !—oh madness ! pride ! impiety !

What if the foot, ordain'd the dust to tread,  
Or hand, to toil, aspir'd to be the head ? 260  
What if the head, the eye, or ear repin'd  
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind ?  
Just as absurd for any part to claim  
To be another, in this gen'ral frame ;  
Just as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains  
The great directing Mind of all ordains.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body nature is, and God the soul ;  
That, chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the same,  
Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame, 270  
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glow's in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,  
Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,  
Spreads undivided, operates unspent ;  
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,  
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart ;

As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,  
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns :  
To him no high, no low, no great, no small ;  
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all. 280

Cease then, nor order imperfection name :  
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.  
Know thy own point : this kind, this due degree  
Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee.  
Submit. In this, or any other sphere,  
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear :  
Safe in the hand of one disposing Pow'r,  
Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.  
All nature is but art unknown to thee ;  
All chance, direction which thou canst not see ; 290  
All discord, harmony not understood ;  
All partial evil, universal good ;  
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite  
One truth is clear, 'Whatever is, is right.'

## EPISTLE II

### ARGUMENT.

*Of the nature and state of man with respect to himself,  
as an individual.*

- I. The business of man not to pry into God, but to study himself. His middle nature: his powers and frailties, 1. The limits of his capacity, 19. II. The two principles of man, self-love and reason, both necessary, 53. Self-love the stronger, and why, 67. Their end the same, 81. III. The passions, and their use, 93. The predominant passion, and its force, 131. Its necessity, in directing men to different purposes, 165. Its providential use, in fixing our principle, and ascertaining our virtue, 175. IV. Virtue and vice joined in our mixed nature; the limits near, yet the things separate and evident: What is the office of reason, 203. V. How odious vice in itself, and how we deceive ourselves into it, 217. VI. That, however, the ends of Providence and general good are answered in our passions and imperfections, 231. How usefully these are distributed in all orders of men, 241. How useful they are to society, 249. And to individuals, in every state, 261, and every age of life, 271



## EPISTLE II.

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,  
The proper study of mankind is man.  
Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,  
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:  
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,  
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,  
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;  
In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast;  
In doubt his mind or body to prefer;  
Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err; 10  
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,  
Whether he thinks too little or too much:  
Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd;  
Still by himself abus'd or disabus'd;  
Created half to rise, and half to fall;  
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;  
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd:  
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

Go, wondrous creature! mount where science guides,  
Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides; 20  
Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,  
Correct old Time, and regulate the sun;  
Go, soar with Plato to th' empyreal sphere,  
To the first good, first perfect, and first fair;

Or tread the mazy round his follow'rs trod,  
 And quitting sense call imitating God ;  
 As eastern priests in giddy circles run,  
 And turn their heads to imitate the sun  
 Go, teach eternal wisdom how to rule—  
 Then drop into thyself, and be a fool ! 30

Superior beings, when of late they saw  
 A mortal man unfold all nature's law,  
 Admir'd such wisdom in an earthly shape,  
 And shew'd a Newton as we shew an ape.

Could he, whose rules the rapid comet bind,  
 Describe or fix one movement of his mind ?  
 Who saw its fires here rise, and there descend,  
 Explain his own beginning, or his end ;  
 Alas what wonder ! man's superior part  
 Uncheck'd may rise, and climb from art to art ; 40  
 But when his own great work is but begun,  
 What reason weaves, by passion is undone.

Trace science then, with modesty thy guide ;  
 First strip off all her equipage of pride ;  
 Deduct what is but vanity or dress,  
 Or learning's luxury, or idleness ;  
 Or tricks to shew the stretch of human brain,  
 Mere curious pleasure, or ingenious pain ;  
 Expunge the whole, or lop th' excrescent parts  
 Of all our vices have created arts ; 50  
 Then see how little the remaining sum,  
 Which serv'd the past, and must the times to come !

Two principles in human nature reign ;  
 Self-love, to urge, and reason, to restrain ;  
 Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call,  
 Each works its end, to move or govern all :  
 And to their proper operation still  
 Ascribe all Good, to their improper, Ill.

Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul ;  
 Reason's ~~comparing~~ balance rules the whole. 60

Man, but for that, no action could attend,  
 And, but for this, were active to no end:  
 Fix'd like a plant on his peculiar spot,  
 To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot:  
 Or, meteor-like, flame lawless thro' the void,  
 Destroying others, by himself destroy'd.

Most strength the moving principle requires;  
 Active its task, it prompts, impels, inspires.  
 Sedate and quiet, the comparing lies,  
 Form'd but to check, delib'rate, and advise. 70  
 Self-love, still stronger, as its objects nigh;  
 Reason's at distance, and in prospect lie:  
 That sees immediate good by present sense;  
 Reason, the future and the consequence.  
 Thicker than arguments, temptations throng,  
 At best more watchful this, but that more strong.  
 The action of the stronger to suspend,  
 Reason still use, to reason still attend.  
 Attention habit and experience gains;  
 Each strengthens reason, and self-love restrains. 80  
 Let subtle schoolmen teach these friends to fight,  
 More studious to divide than to unite;  
 And grace and virtue, sense and reason split,  
 With all the rash dexterity of wit.  
 Wits, just like fools, at war about a name,  
 Have full as oft no meaning, or the same.  
 Self-love and reason to one end aspire,  
 Pain their aversion, pleasure their desire;  
 But greedy that, its object would devour,  
 This taste the honey, and not wound the flow'r: 90  
 Pleasure, or wrong or rightly understood,  
 Our greatest evil, or our greatest good.

Modes of self-love the passions we may call;  
 'Tis real good, or seeming, moves them all:  
 But since not ev'ry good we can divide,  
 And reason bids us for our own provide,

Passions, tho' selfish, if their means be fair,  
 List under Reason, and deserve her care ;  
 Those, that imparted, court a nobler aim,  
 Exalt their kind, and take some virtue's name. 100

In lazy apathy let Stoics boast  
 Their virtue fix'd ; 'tis fix'd as in a frost ;  
 Contracted all, retiring to the breast ;  
 But strength of mind is exercise, not rest :  
 The rising tempest puts in act the soul,  
 Parts it may ravage, but preserves the whole.  
 On life's vast ocean diversely we sail,  
 Reason the card, but passion is the gale ;  
 Nor God alone in the still calm we find,  
 He mounts the storm, and walks upon the wind. 110

Passions, like elements, tho' born to fight,  
 Yet, mix'd and soften'd, in his work unite :  
 These 'tis enough to temper and employ ;  
 But what composes man, can man destroy ?  
 Suffice that reason keep to nature's road,  
 Subject, compound them, follow her and God.  
 Love, hope, and joy, fair pleasure's smiling train,  
 Hate, fear, and grief, the family of pain,  
 These mixt with art, and to due bounds confin'd,  
 Make and maintain the balance of the mind : 120  
 The lights and shades, whose well accorded strife  
 Gives all the strength and colour of our life.

Pleasures are ever in our hands or eyes ;  
 And, when in act they cease, in prospect rise :  
 Present to grasp, and future still to find,  
 The whole employ of body and of mind.  
 All spread their charms, but charm not all alike ;  
 On diff'rent senses diff'rent objects strike ;  
 Hence diff'rent passions more or less inflame,  
 As strong or weak, the organs of the frame ; 130  
 And hence one master passion in the breast,  
 Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest.

As man, perhaps, the moment of his breath,  
 Receives the lurking principle of death ;  
 The young disease, that must subdue at length,  
 Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength :  
 So, cast and mingled with his very frame,  
 The mind's disease, its ruling passion came ;  
 Each vital humour which should feed the whole,  
 Soon flows to this, in body and in soul : 140  
 Whatever warms the heart, or fills the head,  
 As the mind opens, and its functions spread,  
 Imagination plies her dang'rous art,  
 And pours it all upon the peccant part.  
 Nature its mother, habit is its nurse ;  
 Wit, spirit, faculties, but make it worse ;  
 Reason itself but gives it edge and pow'r,  
 As heav'n's blest beam turns vinegar more sour.

We, wretched subjects tho' to lawful sway,  
 In this weak queen some fav'rite still obey : 150  
 Ah ! if she lend not arms, as well as rules,  
 What can she more than tell us we are fools ?  
 Teach us to mourn our nature, not to mend,  
 A sharp accuser, but a helpless friend !  
 Or from a judge turn pleader, to persuade  
 The choice we make, or justify it made ;  
 Proud of an easy conquest all along,  
 She but removes weak passions for the strong :  
 So, when small humours gather to a gout,  
 The doctor fancies he has driv'n them out. 160

Yes, nature's road must ever be preferr'd ;  
 Reason is here no guide, but still a guard ;  
 'Tis hers to rectify, not overthrow,  
 And treat this passion more as friend than foe ;  
 A mightier pow'r the strong direction sends,  
 And sev'ral men impels to sev'ral ends :  
 Like varying winds by other passions tost,  
 This drives them constant to a certain coast.

Let pow'r or knowledge, gold or glory, please,  
 Or (oft more strong than all) the love of ease; 170  
 Thro' life 'tis followed, ev'n at life's exoence;  
 The merchant's toil, the sage's indolence,  
 The monk's humility, the hero's pride,  
 All, all alike, find reason on their side.

Th' Eternal Art educing good from ill,  
 Grafts on this passion our best principle:  
 'Tis thus the mercury of man is fix'd,  
 Strong grows the virtue with his nature mix'd;  
 The dross cements what else were too refin'd,  
 And in one int'rest body acts with mind. 180

As fruits, ungrateful to the planter's care,  
 On savage stocks inserted, learn to bear;  
 The surest virtues thus from passions shoot,  
 Wild nature's vigour working at the root.  
 What crops of wit and honesty appear  
 From spleen, from obstinacy, hate or fear!  
 See anger, zeal and fortitude supply;  
 Ev'n av'rice, prudence; sloth, philosophy;  
 Lust, thro' some certain strainers well refin'd,  
 Is gentle love, and charms all womankind; 190  
 Envy, to which th' ignoble mind's a slave,  
 Is emulation in the learn'd or brave;  
 Nor virtue, male or female, can we name,  
 But what will grow on pride, or grow on shame.

Thus nature gives us (let it check our pride)  
 The virtue nearest to our vice allied:  
 Reason the byas turns to good from ill,  
 And Nero reigns a Titus, if he will.  
 The fiery soul abhorr'd in Catiline,  
 In Decius charms, in Curtius is divine: 200  
 The same ambition can destroy or save,  
 And makes a patriot as it makes a knave.

This light and darkness in our chaos join'd,  
 What shall divide? The god within the mind.

Extremes in nature equal ends produce,  
 In man they join to some mysterious use ;  
 Tho' each by turns the other's bound invade,  
 As, in some well-wrought picture, light and shade,  
 And oft so mix, the difference is too nice  
 Where ends the virtue, or begins the vice. 210

Fools ! who from hence into the notion fall,  
 That vice or virtue there is none at all.  
 If white and black blend, soften, and unite  
 A thousands ways, is there no black or white ?  
 Ask your own heart, and nothing is so plain ;  
 'Tis to mistake them costs the time and pain.

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,  
 As, to be hated, needs but to be seen ;  
 Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
 We first endure, then pity, then embrace. 220  
 But where th' extreme of vice, was ne'er agreed :  
 Ask where's the North ? at York, 'tis on the Tweed ;  
 In Scotland, at the Orcades ; and there,  
 At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where.  
 No creature owns it in the first degree,  
 But thinks his neighbour farther gone than he :  
 Ev'n those who dwell beneath its very zone,  
 Or never feel the rage, or never own ;  
 What happier natures shrink at with affright,  
 The hard inhabitant contends is right. 230

Virtuous and vicious ev'ry man must be,  
 Few in th' extreme, but all in the degree ;  
 The rogue and fool by fits is fair and wise ;  
 And ev'n the best, by fits, what they despise.  
 'Tis but by parts we follow good or ill ;  
 For, vice or virtue, self directs it still ;  
 Each individual seeks a sev'ral goal ;  
 But Heav'n's great view is one, and that the whole.  
 That counter-works each folly and caprice ;  
 That disappoints th' effect of ev'ry vice ; 240

'That happy frailties to all ranks apply'd,  
 Shame to the virgin, to the matron pride,  
 Fear to the statesman, rashness to the chief,  
 To kings presumption, and to crowds belief :  
 That virtue's ends from vanity can raise,  
 Which seeks no int'rest, no reward but praise ;  
 And build on wants, and on defects of mind,  
 The joy, the peace, the glory of mankind.

Heav'n forming each on other to depend,  
 A master, or a servant, or a friend, 250  
 Bids each on other for assistance call,  
 'Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all  
 Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally  
 The common int'rest, or endear the tie.  
 To these we owe true friendship, love sincere,  
 Each home-felt joy that life inherits here ;  
 Yet from the same we learn, in its decline,  
 Those joys, those loves, those int'rests to resign ;  
 Taught half by reason, half by mere decay,  
 To welcome death, and calmly pass away. 260

Whate'er the passion—knowledge, fame, or pelf,  
 Not one will change his neighbour with himself.  
 The learn'd is happy nature to explore,  
 The fool is happy that he knows no more ;  
 The rich is happy in the plenty giv'n,  
 The poor contents him with the care of Heav'n.  
 See the blind beggar dance, the cripple sing,  
 The sot a hero, lunatic a king ;  
 The starving chemist in his golden views  
 Supremely blest, the poet in his muse. 270  
 See some strange comfort ev'ry state attend,  
 And pride bestow'd on all, a common friend :  
 See some fit passion ev'ry age supply,  
 Hope travels thro', nor quits us when we die.

Behold the child, by nature's kindly law,  
 Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a straw :



Some livelier play-thing gives his youth delight,  
A little louder, but as empty quite :  
Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,  
And beads and pray'r-books are the toys of age :  
Pleas'd with this bauble still, as that before ;      281  
'Till tir'd he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er.

Mean-while opinion gilds with varying rays  
Those painted clouds that beautify our days ;  
Each want of happiness by hope supply'd,  
And each vacuity of sense by pride :  
These build as fast as knowledge can destroy ;  
In folly's cup still laughs the bubble joy ;  
One prospect lost, another still we gain ;  
And not a vanity is giv'n in vain ;      290  
Ev'n mean self-love becomes, by force divine,  
The scale to measure others' wants by thine.  
See ! and confess one comfort still must rise ;  
'Tis this, Tho' man 's a fool, yet God is wise.

## EPISTLE III.

### ARGUMENT.

*Of the nature and state of man with respect to society.*

- I. The whole universe one system of society, 7. Nothing made wholly for itself, nor yet wholly for another, 27. The happiness of animals mutual, 49. II. Reason or instinct operate alike to the good of each individual, 79. III. Reason or instinct operate also to society in all animals, 109. How far society carried by instinct, 115. How much farther by Reason, 131. IV. Of that which is called the state of nature, 143. Reason instructed by instinct in the invention of arts, 169, and in the forms of society, 179. V. Origin of political societies, 199. Origin of monarchy, 207. VI. Patriarchal government, 212. Origin of true religion and government, from the same principle of love, 231. Origin of superstition and tyranny, from the same principle of fear, 241. The influence of self-love operating to the social and public good, 269. Restoration of true religion and government on their first principle, 283. Mixt government, 288. Various forms of each, and the true end of all, 303.

### EPISTLE III.

HERE then we rest ; ' The Universal Cause  
Acts to one end, but acts by various laws.'  
In all the madness of superfluous health,  
The trim of pride, the impudence of wealth,  
Let this great truth be present night and day ;  
But most be present, if we preach or pray.

Look round our world ; behold the chain of love  
Combining all below and all above.

See plastic nature working to this end,  
The single atoms each to other tend, 10  
Attract, attracted to, the next in place  
Form'd and impell'd its neighbour to embrace.

See matter next, with various life endued,  
Press to one centre still, the gen'ral good.

See dying vegetables life sustain,  
See life dissolving vegetate again :

All forms that perish other forms supply,  
(By turns we catch the vital breath, and die)  
Like bubbles on the sea of matter born,  
They rise, they break, and to that sea return. 20

Nothing is foreign ; parts relate to whole ;  
One all-extending, all-preserving soul  
Connects each being, greatest with the least ;  
Made beast in aid of man, and man of beast ;

All serv'd, all serving : nothing stands alone ;  
The chain holds on, and where it ends, unknown.

Has God, thou fool ! work'd solely for thy good,  
Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food ?  
Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,  
For him as kindly spread the flow'ry lawn : 30  
Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings ?  
Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.  
Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat ?  
Loves of his own and raptures swell the note.  
The bounding steed you pompously bestride,  
Shares with his lord the pleasure and the pride.  
Is thine alone the seed that strews the plain ?  
The birds of heav'n shall vindicate their grain.  
Thine the full harvest of the golden year ?  
Part pays, and justly, the deserving steer : 40  
The hog, that plows not, nor obeys thy call,  
Lives on the labours of this lord of all.

Know, nature's children all divide her care ;  
The fur that warms a monarch, warm'd a bear.  
While man exclaims, 'See all things for my use !'  
'See man for mine !' replies a pamper'd goose :  
And just as short of reason he must fall,  
Who thinks all made for one, not one for all.

Grant that the pow'rful still the weak control ;  
Be man the wit and tyrant of the whole : 50  
Nature that tyrant checks ; he only knows,  
And helps, another creature's wants and woea.  
Say, will the falcon, stooping from above,  
Smit with her varying plumage, spare the dove ?  
Admires the jay the insect's gilded wings ?  
Or hears the hawk when Philomela sings ?  
Man cares for all : to birds he gives his woods,  
To beasts his pastures, and to fish his floods ;  
For some his int'rest prompts him to provide,  
For more his pleasure, yet for more his pride : 60

All feed on one vain patron, and enjoy  
 Th' extensive blessing of his luxury.  
 That very life his learned hunger craves,  
 He saves from famine, from the savage saves ;  
 Nay, feasts the animal he dooms his feast,  
 And, till he ends the being, makes it blest :  
 Which sees no more the stroke, or feels the pain,  
 Than favour'd man by touch ethereal slain.  
 The creature had his feast of life before ;  
 'Thou too must perish, when thy feast is o'er ! 70

To each unthinking being, Heav'n a friend,  
 Gives not the useless knowledge of its end :  
 To man imparts it ; but with such a view  
 As, while he dreads it, makes him hope it too :  
 The hour conceal'd, and so remote the fear,  
 Death still draws nearer, never seeming near.  
 Great standing miracle ! that Heav'n assign'd  
 Its only thinking thing this turn of mind.

Whether with reason, or with instinct blest,  
 Know, all enjoy that pow'r which suits them best ; 80  
 To bliss alike by that direction tend,  
 And find the means proportion'd to their end.  
 Say, where full instinct is th' unerring guide,  
 What Pope or Council can they need beside ?  
 Reason, however able, cool at best,  
 Cares not for service, or but serves when prest,  
 Stays 'till we call, and then not often near ;  
 But honest instinct comes a volunteer,  
 Sure never to o'er-shoot, but just to hit ;  
 While still too wide or short is human wit ; 90  
 Sure by quick nature happiness to gain,  
 Which heavier reason labours at in vain.  
 This too serves always, reason never long ;  
 One must go right, the other may go wrong.  
 See then the acting and comparing pow'rs  
 One in their nature, which are tw<sup>o</sup> in ours ;

And reason raise o'er instinct as you can,  
In this 'tis God directs, in that 'tis man.

Who taught the nations of the field and flood  
To shun their poison, and to choose their food? 100  
Prescient, the tides or tempests to withstand,  
Build on the wave, or arch beneath the sand?  
Who made the spider parallels design,  
Sure as De Moivre, without rule or line?  
Who bid the stork, Columbus-like, explore  
Heav'n's not his own, and worlds unknown before?  
Who calls the council, states the certain day,  
Who forms the phalanx, and who points the way?

God, in the nature of each being, founds  
Its proper bliss, and sets its proper bounds: 110  
But as he fram'd a whole the whole to bless,  
On mutual wants built mutual happiness:  
So from the first, eternal order ran,  
And creature link'd to creature, man to man.  
Whate'er of life all-quick'ning ether keeps,  
Or breathes thro' air, or shoots beneath the deeps,  
Or pours profuse on earth, one nature feeds  
The vital flame, and swells the genial seeds.  
Not man alone, but all that roam the wood,  
Or wing the sky, or roll along the flood, 120  
Each loves itself, but not itself alone,  
Each sex desires alike, 'till two are one.  
Nor ends the pleasure with the fierce embrace:  
They love themselves, a third time, in their race.  
Thus beast and bird their common charge attend,  
The mothers nurse it, and the sires defend;  
The young dismiss'd to wander earth or air,  
There stops the instinct, and there ends the care;  
The link dissolves, each seeks a fresh embrace,  
Another love succeeds, another race. 130  
A longer care man's helpless kind demands;  
That longer care contracts more lasting bands:

Reflection, reason, still the ties improve,  
 At once extend the int'rest and the love :  
 With choice we fix, with sympathy we burn ;  
 Each virtue in each passion takes its turn ;  
 And still new needs, new helps, new habits rise,  
 That graft benevolence on charities.  
 Still as one brood, and as another rose,  
 These nat'ral love maintain'd, habitual those :      140  
 The last, scarce ripen'd into perfect man,  
 Saw helpless him from whom their life began :  
 Mem'ry and forecast just returns engage,  
 That pointed back to youth, this on to age ;  
 While pleasure, gratitude, and hope combin'd,  
 Still spread the int'rest and preserv'd the kind.

Nor think, in nature's state they blindly trod ;  
 The state of nature was the reign of God :  
 Self-love and social at her birth began,  
 Union the bond of all things, and of man.      150  
 Pride then was not ; nor arts, that pride to aid ;  
 Man walk'd with beast, joint tenant of the shade ;  
 The same his table, and the same his bed ;  
 No murder cloth'd him, and no murder fed.  
 In the same temple, the resounding wood,  
 All vocal beings hymn'd their equal God :  
 The shrine with gore unstain'd, with gold undrest,  
 Unbrib'd, unbloody, stood the blameless priest :  
 Heav'n's attribute was universal care,  
 And man's prerogative, to rule, but spare.      160  
 Ah ! how unlike the man of times to come !  
 Of half that live the butcher and the tomb ;  
 Who, foe to nature, hears the gen'ral groan,  
 Murders their species, and betrays his own.  
 But just disease to luxury succeeds,  
 And ev'ry death its own avenger breeds ;  
 The fury-passions from that blood began,  
 And turn'd on man a fiercer ~~savage~~ <sup>man</sup>, man.

See him from nature rising slow to art !  
 To copy instinct then was reason's part ; 170  
 Thus then to man the voice of nature spake,—  
 'Go, from the creatures thy instructions take :  
 Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield ;  
 Learn from the beasts the physic of the field ;  
 Thy arts of building from the bee receive ;  
 Learn of the mole to plow, the worm to weave ;  
 Learn of the little nautilus to sail,  
 Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.  
 Here too all forms of social union find,  
 And hence let reason, late, instruct mankind : 180  
 Here subterranean works and cities see ;  
 There towns ærial on the waving tree.  
 Learn each small people's genius, policies,  
 The ants' republic, and the realm of bees ;  
 How those in common all their wealth bestow,  
 And anarchy without confusion know ;  
 And these for ever, tho' a monarch reign,  
 Their sep'rate cells and properties maintain.  
 Mark what unvaried laws preserve each state,  
 Laws wise as nature, and as fix'd as fate. 190  
 In vain thy reason finer webs shall draw,  
 Entangle justice in her net of law,  
 And right, too rigid, harden into wrong ;  
 Still for the strong too weak, the weak too strong.  
 Yet go ! and thus o'er all the creatures sway,  
 Thus let the wiser make the rest obey ;  
 And for those arts mere instinct could afford,  
 Be crown'd as monarchs, or as gods ador'd.'  
 Great nature spoke ; observant man obey'd ;  
 Cities were built, societies were made : 200  
 Here rose one little state ; another near  
 Grew by like means, and join'd thro' love or fear.  
 Did here the trees with ruddier burdens bend,  
 And there the streams in purer rills descend ?



What war could ravish, commerce could bestow,  
 And he return'd a friend, who came a foe.  
 Converse and love mankind might strongly draw,  
 When love was liberty, and nature law.  
 Thus states were form'd ; the name of king unknown,  
 'Till common int'rest plac'd the sway in one. 210  
 'Twas virtue only (or in arts or arms,  
 Diffusing blessings, or averting harms)  
 The same which in a sire the sons obey'd,  
 A prince the father of a people made.  
 'Till then, by nature crown'd, each patriarch sate,  
 King, priest, and parent, of his growing state ;  
 On him, their second Providence, they hung,  
 Their law his eye, their oracle his tongue.  
 He from the wond'ring furrow call'd the food,  
 Taught to command the fire, control the flood, 220  
 Draw forth the monsters of th' abyss profound,  
 Or fetch th' ærial eagle to the ground,  
 'Till drooping, sick'ning, dying they began  
 Whom they rever'd as God to mourn as man :  
 Then, looking up from sire to sire, explor'd  
 One great first Father, and that first ador'd ;  
 Or plain tradition that this All begun,  
 Convey'd unbroken faith from sire to son ;  
 The worker from the work distinct was known,  
 And simple reason never sought but one. 230  
 Ere wit oblique had broke that steady light,  
 Man, like his Maker, saw that all was right ;  
 To virtue, in the paths of pleasure trod,  
 And own'd a father when he own'd a God.  
 Love all the faith, and all th' allegiance then ;  
 For nature knew no right divine in men,  
 No ill could fear in God ; and understood  
 A sov'reign being, but a sov'reign good.  
 True faith, true policy, united ran,  
 That was but love of God, and this of man. 240

Who first taught souls enslav'd, and realms undone,  
 Th' enormous faith of many made for one ;  
 That proud exception to all nature's laws,  
 T' invert the world, and counter-work its cause ?  
 Force first made conquest, and that conquest, law ;  
 'Till superstition taught the tyrant awe,  
 Then shar'd the tyranny, then lent it aid,  
 And gods of conqu'rors, slaves of subjects made :  
 She, midst the light'ning's blaze, and thunder's sound,  
 When rock'd the mountains, and when groan'd the ground,  
 She taught the weak to bend, the proud to pray,      251  
 To pow'r unseen, and mightier far than they :  
 She, from the rending earth, and bursting skies,  
 Saw gods descend, and fiends infernal rise :  
 Here fix'd the dreadful, there the blest abodes ;  
 Fear made her devils, and weak hope her gods ;  
 Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,  
 Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust ;  
 Such as the souls of cowards might conceive,  
 And, form'd like tyrants, tyrants would believe.      260  
 Zeal then, not charity, became the guide ;  
 And hell was built on spite, and heav'n on pride.  
 Then sacred seem'd th' ethereal vault no more ;  
 Altars grew marble then, and reek'd with gore :  
 Then first the flamen tasted living food ;  
 Next his grim idol smear'd with human blood ;  
 With heav'n's own thunders shook the world below,  
 And play'd the god an engine on his foe.

So drives self-love, thro' just, and thro' unjust,  
 To one man's pow'r, ambition, lucre, lust :      270  
 The same self-love, in all, becomes the cause  
 Of what restrains him, government and laws.  
 For what one likes, if others like as well,  
 What serves one will, when many wills rebel ?  
 How shall he keep, what, sleeping or awake,  
 A weaker man, surprise, a stronger take ?

His safety must his liberty restrain :  
 All join to guard what each desires to gain.  
 Forc'd into virtue thus by self-defence,  
 Ev'n kings learn'd justice and benevolence : 280  
 Self-love forsook the path it first pursu'd,  
 And found the private in the public good.

'Twas then the studious head or gen'rous mind,  
 Follow'r of God, or friend of human-kind,  
 Poet or patriot, rose but to restore  
 The faith and moral nature gave before ;  
 Relum'd her ancient light, not kindled new,  
 If not God's image, yet his shadow drew :  
 Taught pow'r's due use to people and to kings,  
 Taught nor to slack, nor strain its tender strings,  
 The less, or greater, set so justly true, 291  
 That touching one must strike the other too ;  
 'Till jarring int'rests of themselves create  
 Th' according music of a well-mix'd state.  
 Such is the world's great harmony, that springs  
 From order, union, full consent of things ;  
 Where small and great, where weak and mighty, made  
 To serve, not suffer, strengthen, not invade ;  
 More pow'rful each as needful to the rest,  
 And in proportion as it blesses blest ; 300  
 Draw to one point, and to one centre bring  
 Beast, man, or angel, servant, lord, or king.

For forms of government let fools contest ;  
 Whate'er is best administer'd is best :  
 For modes of faith, let graceless zealots fight ;  
 His can't be wrong whose life is in the right :  
 In faith and hope the world will disagree,  
 But all mankind's concern is charity :  
 All must be false that thwart this one great end ;  
 And all of God, that bless mankind, or mend. 310

Man, like the gen'rous vine, supported lives ;  
 The strength he gains is from th' embrace he gives.

On their own axis as the planets run,  
Yet make at once their circle round the sun;  
So two consistent motions act the soul;  
And one regards itself, and one the whole.

Thus God and nature link'd the gen'ral frame,  
And bade self-love and social be the same.

## EPISTLE IV.

### ARGUMENT.

*Of the nature and state of man with respect to happiness.*

- I. False notions of happiness, philosophical and popular, answered, 19. II. It is the end of all men, and attainable by all, 29. God intends happiness to be equal; and to be so, it must be social, since all particular happiness depends on general, and since he governs by general, not particular laws, 35. As it is necessary for order, and the peace and welfare of society, that external goods should be unequal, happiness is not made to consist in these, 49. But notwithstanding that inequality, the balance of happiness among mankind is kept even by providence, by the two passions of hope and fear, 67. III. What the happiness of individuals is, as far as is consistent with the constitution of this world; and that the good man has here the advantage, 77. The error of imputing to virtue what are only the calamities of nature, or of fortune, 93. IV. The folly of expecting that God should alter his general laws in favour of particulars, 121. V. That we are not judges who are good; but that whoever they are, they must be happiest, 131. VI. That external goods are not the proper rewards, but often inconsistent with, or destructive of virtue, 167. That even these can make no man happy without virtue: Instanced in riches, 185. Honours, 193. Nobility, 205. Greatness, 217. Fame, 237. Superior talents, 259. With pictures of human infelicity in men possessed of them all, 269. VII. That virtue only constitutes a happiness, whose object is universal, and whose prospect eternal, 309. That the perfection of virtue and happiness consists in a conformity to the order of Providence here, and a resignation to it here and hereafter, 326.

## EPISTLE IV.

ON happiness ! our being's end and aim !  
Good, pleasure, ease, content ? whate'er thy name :  
That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,  
For which we bear to live, or dare to die,  
Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies,  
O'er-look'd, seen double, by the fool, and wise.  
Plant of celestial seed ! if dropt below,  
Say, in what mortal soil thou deign'st to grow ?  
Fair op'ning to some court's propitious shine,  
Or deep with diamonds in the flaming mine ? 10  
Twin'd with the wreaths Parnassian laurels yield,  
Or reap'd in iron harvests of the field ?  
Where grows ! where grows it not ? If vain our toil,  
We ought to blame the culture, not the soil :  
Fix'd to no spot is happiness sincere,  
'Tis no where to be found, or ev'ry where :  
'Tis never to be bought, but always free,  
And fled from monarchs, St. John ! dwells with thee.  
Ask of the learn'd the way ! The learn'd are blind ;  
This bids to serve, and that to shun mankind ; 20  
Some place the bliss in action, some in ease,  
Those call it pleasure, and contentment these ;  
Some sunk to beasts, find pleasure end in pain ;  
Some swell'd to gods, confess ev'n virtue vain ;

Or indolent, to each extreme they fall,  
To trust in ev'ry thing, or doubt of all.

Who thus define it, say they more or less  
Than this, that happiness is happiness?

Take nature's path, and mad opinion's leave;  
All states can reach it, and all heads conceive;      30  
Obvious her goods, in no extreme they dwell;  
There needs but thinking right, and meaning well;  
And mourn our various portions as we please,  
Equal is common sense, and common ease.

Remember, man, the Universal Cause  
Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws;  
And makes what happiness we justly call  
Subsist not in the good of one, but all.  
There's not a blessing individuals find,  
But some way leans and hearkens to the kind:      40  
No bandit fierce, no tyrant mad with pride,  
No cavern'd hermit, rests self-satisfied:  
Who most to shun or hate mankind pretend,  
Seek an admirer, or would fix a friend:  
Abstract what others feel, what others think,  
All pleasures sicken, and all glories sink:  
Each has his share; and who would more obtain,  
Shall find the pleasure pays not half the pain.

Order is heav'n's first law; and this confess,  
Some are, and must be, greater than the rest,      50  
More rich, more wise; but who infers from hence  
That such are happier, shocks all common sense.  
Heav'n to mankind impartial we confess,  
If all are equal in their happiness:  
But mutual wants this happiness increase;  
All nature's diff'rence keeps all nature's peace.  
Condition, circumstance is not the thing;  
Bliss is the same in subject or in king,  
In who obtain defence, or who defend,  
In him who is, or him who finds a friend:      60

Heav'n breathes thro' ev'ry member of the whole  
 One common blessing, as one common soul.  
 But fortune's gifts if each alike possess,  
 And each were equal, must not all contest?  
 If then to all men happiness was meant,  
 God in externals could not place content.

Fortune her gifts may variously dispose,  
 And these be happy call'd, unhappy those;  
 But Heav'n's just balance equal will appear,  
 While those are plac'd in hope, and these in fear: 70  
 Not present good or ill, the joy or curse,  
 But future views of better, or of worse.

Oh sons of earth! attempt ye still to rise,  
 By mountains pil'd on mountains, to the skies?  
 Heav'n still with laughter the vain toil surveys,  
 And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.

Know, all the good that individuals find,  
 Or God and nature meant to mere mankind,  
 Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of sense,  
 Lie in three words, health, peace, and competence. 80  
 But health consists with temperance alone;  
 And peace, oh virtue! peace is all thy own.  
 The good or bad the gifts of fortune gain;  
 But these less taste them, as they worse obtain.  
 Say, in pursuit of profit or delight,  
 Who risk the most, that take wrong means, or right?  
 Of vice or virtue, whether blest or curst,  
 Which meets contempt, or which compassion first?  
 Count all th' advantage prosp'rous vice attains,  
 'Tis but what virtue flies from and disdains: 90  
 And grant the bad what happiness they would,  
 One they must want, which is, to pass for good.

Oh blind to truth, and God's whole scheme below,  
 Who fancy bliss to vice, to virtue woe!  
 Who sees and follows that great scheme the best,  
 Best knows the blessing, and will most be blest.



But fools the good alone unhappy call,  
 For ills or accidents that chance to all.  
 See Falkland dies, the virtuous and the just !  
 See god-like Turenne prostrate on the dust !      100  
 See Sidney bleeds amid the martial strife !  
 Was this their virtue, or contempt of life ?  
 Say, was it virtue, more tho' heav'n ne'er gave,  
 Lamented Digby ! sunk thee to the grave ?  
 Tell me, if virtue made the son expire,  
 Why, full of days and honour, lives the sire ?  
 Why drew Marseilles' good bishop purer breath,  
 When nature sicken'd, and each gale was death ?  
 Or why so long (in life if long can be)  
 Lent Heav'n a parent to the poor and me ?      110  
     What makes all physical or moral ill ?  
 There deviates nature, and here wanders will.  
 God sends not ill ; if rightly understood,  
 Or partial ill is universal good,  
 Or change admits, or nature lets it fall,  
 Short, and but rare, 'till man improv'd it all.  
 We just as wisely might of Heav'n complain  
 That righteous Abel was destroyed by Cain,  
 As that the virtuous son is ill at ease,  
 When his lewd father gave the dire disease.      120  
 Think we, like some weak prince, th' Eternal Cause  
 Prone for his fav'rites to reverse his laws ?  
     Shall burning Ætna, if a sage requires,  
 Forget to thunder, and recall her fires ?  
 On air or sea new motions be imprest,  
 Oh blameless Bethel ! to relieve thy breast ?  
 When the loose mountain trembles from on high,  
 Shall gravitation cease, if you go by ?  
 Or some old temple, nodding to its fall,  
 For Chartres' head reserve the hanging wall ?      130  
 But still this world (so fitted for the knave)  
 Contents us not. A better shall we have ?

A kingdom of the just then let it be :  
 But first consider how those just agree.  
 The good must merit God's peculiar care ;  
 But who, but God, can tell us who they are ?  
 One thinks on Calvin heav'n's own spirit fell ;  
 Another deems him instrument of hell ;  
 If Calvin feel heav'n's blessing, or its rod,  
 This cries there is, and that, there is no God. 140  
 What shocks one part will edify the rest,  
 Nor with one system can they all be blest.  
 The very best will variously incline,  
 And what rewards your virtue, punish mine,  
 Whatever is, is right. This world, 'tis true,  
 Was made for Cæsar—but for Titus too ;  
 And which more blest, who chain'd his country, say,  
 Or he whose virtue sigh'd to lose a day ?  
 'But sometimes virtue starves, while vice is fed.'  
 What then ? is the reward of virtue bread ? 150  
*That* vice may merit, 'tis the price of toil ;  
 The knave deserves it, when he tills the soil,  
 The knave deserves it, when he tempts the main,  
 Where folly fights for kings, or dives for gain.  
 The good man may be weak, be indolent ;  
 Nor is his claim to plenty, but content.  
 But grant him riches, your demand is o'er ?  
 'No, shall the good want health, the good want power ?'  
 Add health and pow'r, and ev'ry earthly thing,  
 'Why bounded pow'r ? why private ? why no king ? 160  
 Nay, why external for internal giv'n ?  
 Why is not man a god, and earth a heav'n ?'  
 Who ask and reason thus, will scarce conceive  
 God gives enough, while He has more to give :  
 Immense the pow'r, immense were the demand ;  
 Say, at what part of nature will they stand ?  
 What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,  
 The soul's calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt joy,

Is virtue's prize : a better would you fix ?  
 Then give humility a coach and six, 170  
 Justice a conqueror's sword, or truth a gown,  
 Or public spirit its great cure, a crown.  
 Weak, foolish man ! will Heav'n reward us there  
 With the same trash mad mortals wish for here ?  
 The boy and man an individual makes,  
 Yet sigh'st thou now for apples or for cakes ?  
 Go, like the Indian, in another life  
 Expect thy dog, thy bottle, and thy wife,  
 As well as dream such trifles are assign'd,  
 As toys and empires, for a god-like mind. 180  
 Rewards, that either would to virtue bring  
 No joy, or be destructive of the thing :  
 How oft by these at sixty are undone  
 The virtues of a saint at twenty-one !

To whom can riches give repute, or trust,  
 Content, or pleasure, but the good and just ?  
 Judges and senates have been bought for gold,  
 Esteem and love were never to be sold.  
 Oh fool ! to think God hates the worthy mind,  
 The lover and the love of human-kind, 190  
 Whose life is healthful, and whose conscience clear,  
 Because he wants a thousand pounds a year.

Honour and shame from no condition rise ;  
 Act well your part, there all the honour lies.  
 Fortune in men has some small difference made,  
 One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade ;  
 The cobbler apron'd, and the parson gown'd,  
 The friar hooded, and the monarch crown'd.  
 ' What differ more (you cry) than crown and cowl !'  
 I'll tell you, friend : a wise man and a fool. 200  
 You'll find, if once the monarch acts the monk,  
 Or, cobbler-like, the parson will be drunk,  
 Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow ;  
 The rest is all but leather or prunella .

Stuck o'er with titles and hung round with strings,  
That thou may'st be by kings, or whores of kings :  
Boast the pure blood of an illustrious race,  
In quiet flow from Lucrece to Lucrece :  
But by your fathers' worth if yours you rate,  
Count me those only who were good and great. 210  
Go ! if your ancient, but ignoble blood  
Has crept thro' scoundrels ever since the flood,  
Go ! and pretend your family is young ;  
Nor own your fathers have been fools so long.  
What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards ?  
Alas ! not all the blood of all the Howards.

Look next on greatness ; say where greatness lies.  
'Where, but among the heroes and the wise ?'  
Heroes are much the same, the point's agreed,  
From Macedonia's madman to the Swede ; 220  
The whole strange purpose of their lives, to find  
Or make, an enemy of all mankind !  
Not one looks backward, onward still he goes,  
Yet ne'er looks forward further than his nose.  
No less alike the politic and wise ;  
All sly slow things, with circumspective eyes :  
Men in their loose unguarded hours they take,  
Not that themselves are wise, but others weak.  
But grant that those can conquer, these can cheat ;  
'Tis phrase absurd to call a villain great : 230  
Who wickedly is wise, or madly brave,  
Is, but the more a fool, the more a knave.  
Who noble ends by noble means obtains,  
Or failing, smiles in exile or in chains,  
Like good Aurelius let him reign, or bleed  
Like Socrates, that man is great indeed.

What's fame ? a fancied life in others' breath,  
A thing beyond us, ev'n before our death.  
Just what you hear, you have, and what's unknown  
The same (my Lord) if Tully's, or your own. 240

All that we feel of it begins and ends  
In the small circle of our foes or friends ;  
To all beside as much an empty shade  
An Eugene living, as a Cæsar dead ;  
Alike, or when, or where they shone, or shine,  
Or on the Rubicon, or on the Rhine.  
A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod ;  
An honest man's the noblest work of God.  
Fame but from death a villain's name can save,  
As justice tears his body from the grave ; 250  
When what t' oblivion better were resign'd,  
Is hung on high, to poison half mankind.  
All fame is foreign, but of true desert ;  
Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart :  
One self approving hour whole years out-weighs  
Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas ;  
And more true joy Marcellus exil'd feels,  
Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.

In parts superior what advantage lies ?  
Tell (for you can) what is it to be wise ? 260  
'Tis but to know how little can be known ;  
To see all others' faults, and feel our own :  
Condemn'd in bus'ness or in arts to drudge,  
Without a second, or without a judge :  
Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land ?  
All fear, none aid you, and few understand.  
Painful pre-eminence ! yourself to view  
Above life's weakness, and its comforts too.

Bring then these blessings to a strict account ;  
Make fair deductions ; see to what they 'mount : 270  
How much of other each is sure to cost ;  
How each for other oft is wholly lost ;  
How inconsistent greater goods with these ;  
How sometimes life is risk'd, and always ease :  
Think, and if still the things thy envy call,  
Say, would'st thou be the man to whom they fall ?

To sigh for ribbons if thou art so silly,  
 Mark how they grace Lord Umbra, or Sir Billy.  
 Is yellow dirt the passion of thy life?  
 Look but on Gripus, or on Gripus' wife. 280  
 If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shin'd,  
 The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind :  
 Or ravish'd with the whistling of a name,  
 See Cromwell, damn'd to everlasting fame !  
 If all, united, thy ambition call,  
 From ancient story learn to scorn them all.  
 There, in the rich, the honour'd, fam'd and great,  
 See the false scale of happiness complete !  
 In hearts of kings, or arms of queens who lay,  
 How happy those to ruin, these betray ! 290  
 Mark by what wretched steps their glory grows,  
 From dirt and sea-weed as proud Venice rose ;  
 In each how guilt and greatness equal ran,  
 And all that rais'd the hero sunk the man :  
 Now Europe's laurels on their brows behold,  
 But stain'd with blood, or ill exchang'd for gold :  
 Then see them broke with toils, or sunk in ease,  
 Or infamous for plunder'd provinces.  
 Oh wealth ill-fated ! which no act of fame  
 E'er taught to shine, or sanctified from shame ! 300  
 What greater bliss attends their close of life ?  
 Some greedy minion, or imperious wife,  
 The trophied arches, storied halls invade,  
 And haunt their slumbers in the pompous shade.  
 Alas ! not dazzled with their noon-tide ray,  
 Compute the morn and ev'ning to the day ;  
 The whole amount of that enormous fame,  
 A tale, that blends their glory with their shame !  
 Know then this truth, enough for man to know,  
 Virtue alone is happiness below. 310  
 The only point where human bliss stands still,  
 And tastes the good without the fall to ill ;

Where only merit constant pay receives,  
 Is blest in what it takes, and what it gives ;  
 The joy unequal'd, if its end it gain,  
 And if it lose, attended with no pain :  
 Without satiety, tho' e'er so bless'd,  
 And but more relish'd as the more distress'd :  
 The broadest mirth unfeeling folly wears,  
 Less pleasing far than virtue's very tears : 320  
 Good, from each object, from each place acquir'd,  
 For ever exercis'd, yet never tir'd ;  
 Never elated, while one man's oppress'd ;  
 Never dejected, while another's bless'd ;  
 And where no wants, no wishes can remain,  
 Since but to wish more virtue is to gain.

See the sole bliss Heav'n could on all bestow !  
 Which who but feels can taste, but thinks can know :  
 Yet poor with fortune, and with learning blind,  
 The bad must miss, the good, untaught, will find ;  
 Slave to no sect, who takes no private road, 331  
 But looks through nature up to nature's God :  
 Pursues that chain which links th' immense design,  
 Joins heav'n and earth, and mortal and divine ;  
 Sees, that no being any bliss can know,  
 But touches some above, and some below ;  
 Learns, from this union of the rising whole,  
 The first, last purpose of the human soul ;  
 And knows where faith, law, morals, all began,  
 All end, in love of God, and love of man. 340  
 For him alone, hope leads from goal to goal,  
 And opens still, and opens on his soul ;  
 'Till lengthen'd on to faith, and unconfin'd,  
 It pours the bliss that fills up all the mind.  
 He sees, why nature plants in man alone  
 Hope of known bliss, and faith in bliss unknown :  
 (Nature, whose dictates to no other kind  
 Are giv'n in vain, but what they seek they find ;)

Wise is her present ; she connects in this  
His greatest virtue with his greatest 'bliss ; 35C  
At once his own bright prospect to be blest,  
And strongest motive to assist the rest.

Self-love thus push'd to social, to divine,  
Gives thee to make thy neighbour's blessing thine.  
Is this too little for the boundless heart ?  
Extend it, let thy enemies have part :  
Grasp the whole worlds of reason, life, and sense,  
In one close system of benevolence :  
Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,  
And height of bliss but height of charity. 360

God loves from whole to parts : but human soul  
Must rise from individual to the whole.  
Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,  
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake ;  
The centre mov'd, a circle strait succeeds,  
Another still, and still another spreads ;  
Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace ;  
His country next ; and next all human race ;  
Wide and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind  
Take ev'ry creature in, of ev'ry kind ; 370  
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,  
And heav'n beholds its image in his breast.

Come then, my friend, my genius, come along ;  
Oh master of the poet, and the song !  
And while the muse now stoops, or now ascends,  
To man's low passions, or their glorious ends,  
Teach me, like thee, in various nature wise,  
To fall with dignity, with temper rise ;  
Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer  
From grave to gay, from lively to severe ; 380  
Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,  
Intent to reason, or polite to please.  
Oh ! while along the stream of time thy name  
Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame ;



Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,  
Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale?  
When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,  
Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,  
Shall then this verse to future age pretend  
Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend? 390  
That, urg'd by thee, I turn'd the tuneful art  
From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart;  
For wit's false mirror held up nature's light;  
Shew'd erring pride, whatever is, is right;  
That reason, passion, answer one great aim;  
That true self-love and social are the same;  
That virtue only makes our bliss below;  
And all our knowledge is, ourselves to know.

## NOTES.

### THE DESIGN.

**my Lord Bacon.** It is curious to find this common mistake as early as in Pope. It may be regarded as a popular protest against the disguise of name adopted by many newly-made peers, but wisely not by Macaulay nor by Tennyson. It is known that Bacon was a lord; but the popular mind does not burden itself with his titles, Lord Verulam, Viscount St. Albans. The quotation is from the dedication of the enlarged edition of the *Essays*, in 1625, to the Duke of Buckingham: "I do now publish my *Essays*, which, of all my works, have been most current, for that, as it seems, they come home to men's business and bosoms." On Bacon, see note, iv. 281.

### EPISTLE I.

**Argument.** The old meaning of this word was 'subject.' So Milton, *Paradise Lost*, i. 24 :

• "The height of this great argument."

The Latin *argumentum* has this force, and is specially used for the subject-matter of a play. Milton also uses 'argument,' as Pope here, for a summary of the contents of a book. An argument is prefixed to each book of the *Paradise Lost*.

5. **Expatiate**, derived from Latin *ex* and *spatior*, to range over. (1) To wander in space without restraint; (2) in discussion or argument, to travel over wide ground.

6. **maze**. A kind of practical puzzle; hedges being planted so as to make a long walk with intricate turnings in a small space.

There is a very famous maze in the grounds of Hampton Court Palace. The most famous labyrinth in ancient story (name said to be derived from an Egyptian king named Labyris, but more probably akin to the Greek *λαύρα*, a passage,) was that built by Dædalus in Crete, to imprison the fabulous beast, the minotaur. The only means of finding the way in or out of this was by a skein of thread. There was a similar fable in English history to the effect that Henry II. built a labyrinth at Woodstock to imprison fair Rosamond. The word 'maze' is said to be from A.S. word, meaning a whirlpool. There is a verb 'maze,' to confuse (like amaze); and in provincial English the word means to wander as if stupefied, mazed, drunk. In the first edition this line was :

"A mighty maze of walks without a plan."

Pope altered it, says Dr. Johnson, because "if there were no plan, it was in vain to describe or to trace the maze."

7. *A wild.* 10. *the open.* These words, here nouns, are properly adjectives. *Wild*, as a noun, is commoner in the plural, 'the wilds of Africa.' Milton, *Paradise Regained*, i. 331, has :

"I saw and heard, for we sometimes  
Who dwell this *wild*, constrained by want, come forth  
To town or village nigh (nighest is far)."

10. *covert* is used indifferently as noun or adjective. It is properly participle of verb 'cover.' It is adjective in Bacon's *Essay Of Gardens* : "You are, of either side the green, to plant a *covert* alley, upon carpenters' work, about twelve feet in height, by which you may go in shade into the garden." It is noun in Milton's *Comus*, 945 :

"I shall be your faithful guide  
Through this gloomy *covert* wide."

The modern sporting term is *cover*.

Notice the metaphors from field sports : *beat*, *open*, *covert* from the chase ; *shoot as it flies* from shooting. Abbott and Seeley, *English Lessons for English People*, p. 103, say that "technical metaphors borrowed from athletic sports, polite amusements and warfare, being also vivid and real, are liked by the English people and used by our best authors." They instance, 'pull well together,' 'force an antagonist's hand,' but also remark that many similar metaphors are in bad taste and vulgar, the only safe rule being the custom of polite society. Mr. Pattison quotes two quaint parallel passages from two old writers, showing the use of similar illustrations, even on the most serious topics. Henry King (chaplain to James I.) :

"O guide my faith ! and by thy grace's clew  
Teach me to hunt that kingdom at the view."

And Francis Quarles (a contemporary of King):

"In the discovery of the chiefest good  
Keenly they hunted, beat in every brake,  
Forward they went, on either hand, and back  
Returned they counter; but their deep mouth'd art,  
Though often challeng'd scent, yet ne'er could start  
In all the enclosures of philosophy  
That game, from squat, they term felicity."

*Beating* is done with a view to start the game.

13. **Eye.** A verb. Milton's *Comus*, 329:

"Eye me, blest Providence."

15. **candid.** According to Elwin, 'candid' has here the unusual sense of 'lenient and favourable in our judgment.' The word is derived from the Latin *candidus* (white), and usually means 'open, ingenuous, free from malice.' In this sense, Pope has the lines:

"A *candid* judge will read each piece of wit  
With the same spirit that its author writ."

'Candid' is used ironically in the sense of 'anxious to find fault' in the well-known lines:

"But of all plagues, good heaven, thy wrath can send,  
Save, save, oh! save me, from the *candid* friend."

Canning, *New Morality*.

16. **vindicate the ways of God.** Imitated from Milton's introduction to *Paradise Lost*, i. 26:

"I may assert Eternal Providence  
And *justify the ways of God* to men."

26. **circle.** Verb, sometimes active, meaning as here—(a) to move round an object, or (b) to surround, i.e. be round it, sometimes (c) neuter, to move round. Illustrations from Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

(a) "Angels,—for ye behold Him, and with songs  
And choral symphonies, day without night  
*Circle* his throne rejoicing" (v. 163).

(b) "Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar  
*Circled* his head" (iii. 626).

(c) "For seasons and for days and *circling* years" (vii. 342).

27. **What varied being peoples every star.** "Before the great truths of astronomy were demonstrated; before the dimensions and motions of the planets were ascertained, and the fixed stars placed at inconceivable distances from the system to which we belong, philosophers and poets described in the celestial spheres, the abodes of the blest; but it was not till the form and size and motions of the earth were known, and till the conditions of the

other planets were found to be the same, that analogy compelled us to believe that these planets must be inhabited like our own" (Sir David Brewster, *More Worlds Than One*, introduction). The first formal treatise on the *Plurality of Worlds* was published in Paris in 1686 by M. Fontenelle, Secretary to the Academy of Sciences. This date is one year before the publication of Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia*. Many astronomers, including Newton, have written in support of the view that the earth is not the only orb in the universe on which animate life is found. Dr. Whewell, however, has taken the opposite side. His treatise on the subject bears the title of the *Plurality of Worlds*. There is little doubt that this book, which is a book of marked ability, was the work of Whewell's pen; but Whewell never definitely acknowledged that it was written by him.

peoples every star. For the thought, compare Tennyson, *Ode on Death of Duke of Wellington* :

"Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll  
Round us, each with different powers  
And other forms of life than ours."

People used as verb in Thomson, *Seasons*, *Summer*, 250 :

"Ten thousand forms, ten thousand diff'rent tribes  
People the blaze."

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, vii. 151, has the opposite verb :

"To have *dispeopled* Heaven."

29. *this frame*, the world. The metaphor is from a fabric put together of various parts or members, and arranged upon a definite system. Tillotson, in his sermons, says : "We see this vast *frame* of the world and an innumerable multitude of creatures in it; all which we who believe in a God attribute to Him as the author." Bacon, *Essay* 16, *Of Atheism* : "I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud and the Alcoran, than that this universal *frame* is without a mind." Milton, *Paradise Lost*, v. 154 :

"These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good,  
Almighty ! Thine this universal *frame*."

41. *argent fields*, the sky, bright like silver. Borrowed from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iii. 460 :

"Those *argent fields* more likely habitants,  
Translated saints or middle spirits hold."

42. *Jove's Satellites*. Latin *satelles*, a companion. "This word is commonly pronounced in prose with *e* mute in the plural, as in the singular, and is therefore only of three syllables, but Pope has in the plural continued the Latin form and assigned it four, I think, improperly" (Johnson, *Dictionary*). Mr. Patti-

son, on the contrary, says this was the pronunciation of Pope's time. He quotes a contemporary poet :

"By his example in their endless race  
The primaries lead their *satellites*."

If the word rhymes with race, it looks like a Latin word pronounced in the Italian fashion, which is now called 'the new' pronunciation, but is really the old. Words recently taken from the Latin, and still unfamiliar, naturally retain their Latin shape and pronunciation. So Shakspeare, *Julius Cæsar*, III. ii. 192 :

"Here at the base of Pompey's statua" (not statue).

Bacon, Essay 13, : "Misanthropi" (not misanthropes). When the word has become familiar, the pronunciation follows the English rule, throwing the accent back.

The planet Jupiter (here called Jove) has four satellites which revolve round it, as the moon revolves round the earth. The smallest is about the size of the moon. The diameter of Jupiter is more than twelve times the diameter of the earth ; its bulk about 340 times. Voltaire's comment on this passage was that Pope need not have asked the skies. Any mathematician could have told him that if the satellites had been larger than Jove, Jove would have moved round them !

45. Where all, etc., i.e. where there can be no gap, unless there is to be a want of cohesion (Ward).

55. one single, i.e. movement.

64. Egypt's god. Apis, the Bull of Memphis, enjoyed the highest honours as a god among the Egyptians. It is not certain whether the bull himself was worshipped, or whether he was regarded as the symbol of a great divinity, as, for instance, the sun. There was an elaborate system of marks by which it was recognized that a particular bull was Apis. He was treated with strict ceremony, but was not allowed to live more than twenty-five years, when he was killed and secretly buried in a well. Then another bull with the marks was sought. Milton confuses Osiris with Apis (*On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, 213) :

"Nor is Osiris seen

"In Memphian grove, or green,

Trampling the unshower'd grass with lowings loud."

69. fault, rhyming with *ought*. Johnson (*Dictionary*) says, "The *l* is sometimes sounded and sometimes mute. In conversation it is generally suppressed." Now-a-days it is always sounded. The *l* is from the Latin *fallo*. The French is *faute*, where the *l* has changed into *u*.

77. hides the book of fate. Compare Horace, *Odes*, III. xxix. 29 :

"Prudens futuri temporis exitum •

Caliginosa nocte premit Deus."

86. **Heav'n.** Pope frequently uses Heaven in the sense of God. Hence here the relative "who." At iii. 77 he uses "its" of Heav'n.

87. **Who sees ... a sparrow fall.** Pope had manifestly in his mind the words of Christ. *St. Matt.* x. 29-31, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." The expression *equal eye* seems to imply that Pope considered the death of a hero or of a sparrow, the bursting of a bubble and destruction of a world equal in the eyes of God. He probably does not mean more than that God cares for small things as well as great. *St. Paul's* language seems rather to imply the contrary (*Cor.* ix. 9, 10)—"Doth God take care for oxen? or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written."

89. **Atoms**, an imaginary body, so small that it cannot be cut smaller. Greek, *άτομος*, indivisible; *τέμνειν*, to cut. See iii. 10. Some ancient philosophers held that the world was made of a "fortuitous concourse of atoms." This doctrine is laughed at in the *Rejected Addresses* in the lines assigned to Dr. Busby:

"I sing how casual bricks in airy climb  
Encountered casual horsehair, casual lime,  
How rafters borne thro' wondering clouds elate  
Kissed in their slope blue elemental slate."

95. **Elwin** quotes a lively saying ascribed to Bacon:

"Hopes makes a good breakfast but a bad supper."

96. **Man never is, but always to be blest.** The following strange commentary is from Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, vol. v., p. 295: "He (Dr. Johnson) asserted that the present was never a happy state to any human being; but that, as every part of life, of which we are conscious, was at some point of time a period yet to come, in which felicity was expected, there was some happiness produced by hope. Being pressed upon this subject, and asked if he really was of opinion that though, in general, happiness was very rare in human life, a man was not sometimes happy in the moment that was present, he answered—'Never, but when he is drunk.'"

98. **expatiates.** See line 5, note.

100. **wind**, formerly always rhymed with *mind*. Now-a-days we make the i short. Johnson said, "I cannot find it in my mind to call it wind."

102. Pope in a note says that, according to an ancient belief, the souls of the just were admitted to the milky way. This is expressed in Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, a part of the *de Republica*, in former times much read.

110. *seraph*. Derived from a Hebrew verb meaning 'to burn.' Cp. *Isaiah* vi. 6: "Then flew one of the *seraphims* unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." The proper Hebrew plural of the word is *seraphim*. It is curious that the translators of the English Bible added an *s*. See also line 278:

"As the rapt *seraph* that adores and burns."

112. *dog*. Critics have objected to this that the dog is not a native of the new world. This is an error. Columbus found two kinds of dog in the West Indies, and Fernandez describes three in Mexico. (See Darwin, *Animals and Plants under Domestication*, chap. i., p. 23.)—Pattison.

113. *sense*, *sc.* the senses.

117. *gust*. Latin, *gustus*, taste. For thy *gust*, "in order to please your palate." The word is not used in the present day, though the compound 'disgust' is very common. The French *gout* may also be compared. There is plenty of authority for 'gust' in writers before Pope; e.g. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, x. 565:

"They fondly thinking to allay  
Their appetite with *gust*, instead of fruit  
Chew'd bitter ashes, which th' offended taste  
With spattering noise rejected."

Johnson makes this *gust* = *gusto*, which is really an Italian word, and when used in English means special delight in tasting. Shakspeare, *Timon of Athens*, III. v. 54:

"To kill I grant is sin's extremest *gust*;  
But in defence by many 'tis made just."

The word *gust*, meaning a sudden blast of wind, is wholly different, probably from an Icelandic root.

121. The *balance* in which qualities are weighed; the *rod* with which offences are chastised (Elwin).

133. *genial*, birth-giving. Connected with Latin *gigno*, *genui*, I give birth to. Greek *γεννομαι*, I become. Cp. *Genius*.

136. *nectareous*, nectar, the drink of the Gods, as ambrosia, the food of the Gods.

140. *canopy*, from the Greek *κωνοπέδιον*, which is from *κωνωψ*, a gnat, and is literally a net to keep away gnats, a mosquito curtain. By the law of amelioration the word has passed on to mean a grander covering, as that over a throne.

143. Pope is alluding to a recent earthquake in Chili in the February of the year in which this Epistle was published. It lasted at intervals for nearly the whole month, and swallowed up a whole city.



156. **Borgia.** Cæsar Borgia, son of Pope Alexander VI., but born before his father's elevation to the Papal Throne. He was handsome, highly accomplished, and brave, but probably the worst man of a very wicked age. His physical strength was so great that he could cut off a bull's head with a single blow of his sword. His personal fascinations were such that he could gain almost any point he wished by persuasion. Yet his favourite methods of achieving his ends were not force or flattery, but lying, poison, or the dagger of the assassin. Poor Italy won through him and those like him the hateful nickname of "the Poisoner." He poisoned his own brother; and at length poison, which he used so freely, nearly killed him. His father the Pope, and he, by mistake, drank some poison which they had intended for a company of twelve cardinals. To complete the horror of such a story, it has only to be added that this poison was being given in the Holy Eucharist. The Pope died, but Cæsar, owing to his strong constitution, recovered. In consequence, however, of the advancement of a personal enemy to the papacy, he was forced to betake himself to the profession of a soldier of fortune; and after living the life of an adventurer for a few years, he was killed in an unimportant skirmish.

**Catiline.** See ii. 199. L. Sergius Catilina, a Roman noble, made famous by his conspiracy to upset the constitution of his country. Sallust has written a history of this conspiracy, which also stands famous in literature because of the speeches which Cicero made against Catiline. Catiline was of great physical strength, licentious, and reckless. He became the leader of a band of young nobles like him in character at a time when the simplicity of the earlier Romans was disappearing. Cicero was the consul who detected and quelled the conspiracy; and it may be added that Cicero was never tired of boasting of his services in the matter.

160. **young Ammon.** When Alexander of Macedon in his victorious career came to Egypt, he made a pilgrimage across the desert to an oasis, in which was situated the famous shrine of Ammon, the great Libyan deity, the protector of flocks, always represented wearing the horns of a ram. Those who managed the oracle had sufficient of the spirit of courtiers to know that a little flattery would propitiate the great conqueror. They saluted him therefore as the son of Ammon, and he was duly proud of the title. *Temple of Fame*, 151-4:

"High on a throne with trophies charg'd, I view'd  
The youth that all things but himself subdued:  
His feet on sceptres and tiaras trod  
And his horn'd head belied the Libyan God."

And *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, 117:

"Ammon's great son one shoulder had too high."

174. See *Ps. viii. 5*, "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels."

181. *compensated*. Notice the accent is on the second syllable. Now-a-days the accent is generally on the third. The older practice follows the English rule, which is to throw the accent as far back as possible.

193. *microscopic eye*, an eye like a microscope. It is Sam Weller's "pair o' patent double million magnifyin' gas microscopes of hextra power." Thomson, *Summer*, 288:

"Evading e'en the *microscopic eye*,"

*sc.* the eye of the microscope. Locke says, "if man had a *microscopical eye*." Professor Huxley in the passage quoted, in the note on 201, uses *microscopic* in the sense of something very small, requiring a microscope to see it.

195. *optics*. Optics, properly, the science that treats of light and vision, and all that is connected with sight. But optic is here used as meaning an eye.

*finer optics*, eyes with stronger power of vision.

197. The grammar is defective: it has suffered through compression. "What were the use, if touch were tremblingly alive all o'er." And again, "What were the use if we were to die of a rose."

198. *agonize*, to suffer pain. Greek, *ἀγών*, a struggle. Milton wrote a play called *Samson Agonistes*. We do not use the simple word 'agonist,' but we do its compound, 'antagonist.' Thomson uses the verb, *Summer*, 1047:

"You heard the groans

Of agonizing ships from shore to shore."

The ships are represented as in pain because their crews were in pain.

201. *If nature thunder'd*. Locke, *Essay on Human Understanding*, ii. 23, says: "If our sense of hearing were but one thousand times quicker, than it is, how would a perpetual noise distract us? We should in the quietest retirement be less able to sleep or meditate than in the middle of a sea fight." Compare, also, the following: "The spectacle afforded by the wonderful energies prisoned within the compass of the *microscopic* hair of a plant, which we commonly regard as a merely passive organism, is not easily forgotten by one who has watched its display, continued hour after hour, without pause or sign of weakening. The possible complexity of many other organic forms, seemingly as simple as the protoplasm of the nettle, dawns upon one; and the comparison of such a protoplasm to a body with an internal circulation, which has been put forward by an eminent physiologist, loses much of its startling character. Currents similar

to those of the hairs of the nettle have been observed in a great multitude of very different plants, and weighty authorities have suggested that they probably occur, in more or less perfection, in all young vegetable cells. If such be the case, the wonderful noonday silence of a tropical forest is, after all, due only to the dulness of our hearing; and could our ears catch the murmur of these tiny maelstroms, as they whirl in the innumerable myriads of living cells which constitute each tree, we should be stunned, as with the roar of a great city" ("The Physical Basis of Life," by Professor Huxley, *Fortnightly Review* for February, 1869, p. 132).

202. *music of the spheres.* Pythagoras maintained that the rotation of the planets was attended with music. Plato held a very similar theory. The fancy is very common in English poetry. Shakspeare, *Merchant of Venice*, v. i. 60:

"There's not the smallest orb, which thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."

Milton, *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, 125;

"Ring out, ye crystal spheres!  
Once bless our human ears,  
If ye have power to touch our senses so."

One of Milton's Cambridge Prolusions is *On the Music of the Spheres*, which he affirms that we should hear, if our hearts were pure and our minds not bowed down to earth. That is Shakspeare's reason why we do not hear—our ears are closed in by decay. Pope seems to imply that our ears are not fine enough. Plato says, that it is because the music is continuous; if there were a break in the sound, we should notice the change. Pope's view seems to be that of Cicero. "Hic vero tantus est totius mundi incitatissima conversione sonitus, ut eum aures hominum capere non possint, sicut intueri solém adversum nequitias" ("Scipio's Dream," *De Repub.*, vi. xviii.).

204. *purling*, making a gentle noise: compare purr of a cat. There is a Swedish word like it, meaning 'simmer' or 'murmur.' Wedgwood, who is often fanciful, connects it with pearl, as if the brook were dropping or rolling pearls. Milton, *Paradise Regained*, ii. 345:

"All fish from sea or shore,  
Freshet, or *purling* brook, or shell or fin."

Pope, in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 150:

"A painted mistress or a *purling* stream."

And Pope in a note thereto says that

“A painted meadow or a *purling stream*,”

is a verse of Mr. Addison.

210. *green myriads*. The myriads are not green; it is the grass that is green.

212. *curtain beam*. These are strong expressions for dim sight and very keen sight.

213. *the headlong lioness*. The manner of the lions hunting their prey in the deserts of Africa is this: At their first going out in the night-time they set up a loud roar, and then listen to the noise made by the beasts in their flight, pursuing them by the ear, and not by the nostril. It is probable the story of the jackal's hunting for the lion was occasioned by observation of this defect of scent in that terrible animal (Pope).

214. *tainted*. On which the scent lies.

219. *nice*. Used four times in the *Essay on Man*: here, the *nice* bee. 30. *Nice* dependencies. 223. A *nice* barrier. II.—209. The difference is too *nice*. In each of the instances the word implies ‘keen discrimination’; but in the case of the bee it is subjective, discriminating, whereas in the others it is objective—dependencies, barrier, difference, which only a delicate sense perceives. Milton, *Comus*, 139: “The *nice* morn”—fastidious morning. *Paradise Regained*, iv. 157:

“Nothing will please the difficult and *nice*,”

*i.e.* fastidious. This use is by no means extinct, though it is not as common as the meaning ‘good to eat,’ or especially amongst ladies, as a general term of praise. It is from Latin *nescius*, ignorant, through the Old French *nice*. In English, the word first meant ‘foolish,’ as in Chaucer; and even in Shakspeare, *Second Part of Henry IV.*, iv. i. 191:

“every idle, *nice* and wanton reason,”

where ‘*nice*’ means foolish. The steps are (1) foolish, simple; (2) fastidious, hard to please; (3) delicious.

221. *the grov'ling swine*. Milton, *Comus*, 53:

“And downward fell into a *groveling swine*.”

*Proverbs*, xi. 22: “As a jewel of gold in a *swine's* snout.” In all of these cases the word is singular. The German *schwein* is singular. The word is now generally plural, and there are people who maintain that it is an Anglo-Saxon plural, a corruption of *sowen*; but the old use in the singular and the German form seem to disprove this. *Grov'ling*, properly an adverb, the termination being similar to that of *darkling* and *headlong*. As the word ended in *ing*, it was taken for a present participle, and the verb *grovel* invented.

223. *barrier*. Here a dissyllable and with the accent on the second syllable. The word, apparently new, from French *barrière*, and the English law of throwing back the accent not yet in operation.

234. *quick, living*. So in the Apostle's Creed: "From thence He shall come to judge the *quick* and the dead." And 2 *Tim.* iv. 1. A *quick* set hedge is a hedge of living plants set to grow. The *quick* under the nail. We use the expression 'stung to the *quick*' when an insult is felt very keenly. The root is Teutonic, but connected with the Latin *vigeo, vivo*. The other meaning, 'moving fast,' is connected, as fast motion may be taken as a special sign of life.

237. *Vast chain of being*. Thomson, *Seasons, Summer*, 333:

"Has any seen  
The mighty chain of beings, lessening down  
From Infinite Perfection to the brink  
Of dreary nothing, desolate abyss!  
From which astonish'd thought, recoiling, turns?"

The similarity is sufficiently close to suggest a comparison of dates. Thomson published the *Seasons* in 1727. This Epistle of *The Essay on Man* appeared in 1732. Mr. Ward says that the passage was added by Thomson in the second edition of his poem, but in Bell's edition of Thomson the variations from the first edition are carefully marked, and Mr. Ward's statement is not borne out. It is known that some of the alterations in later editions of Thomson's *Seasons* were suggested by Pope.

259. Compare 1 *Cor.* xii. 15-21.

270. *ethereal*. Properly of the nature of ether, subtlest of the elements, poetically used for heavenly, celestial. So used by Milton.

276. *hair as heart*. Notice the alliteration:

"Apt alliteration's artful aid."  
"Begot by butchers, but by bishops bred,  
How high his Honour holds his haughty head."

In early English poetry alliteration is a constant feature. In *The Vision of Piers the Plowman* it takes the place occupied by rhyme in later poetry. Its use in this passage is strongly condemned by Dugald Stuart. "Alliteration pleases only on slight occasions, when it may be supposed that the mind is in some degree playful, and under the influence of those principles of association which commonly take place when we are careless or disengaged. Every person must be offended with this ... which forms part of a very sublime description of the Divine power" (*Works*, vol. ii., p. 262). The alliteration is not the only fault in this passage. The antithesis is unreal, for there is no connection between hair

and heart, and no reason why they should be contrasted. It has been called "a vile antithesis."

278. *rapt*, snatched away. Skeat says the word was originally English, from Scandinavian. The O. Eng. verb was 'rap,' to hurry, to seize hastily, to snatch. "To rap out an oath" is a modern survival of this. 'Rapped' was the past participle, spelt 'rapt' by confusion with Latin *raptus*, past participle of *rapere*, to seize. The influence of the Latin word has absorbed the earlier.

*seraph* ... burns. See note on l. 110.

279. *To him*. "The concluding lines appear to be a false jingle of words which neutralize the whole of Pope's argument. If there is to Providence 'no high, no low, no great, no small,' the gradation of beings is a delusion. What things are in the sight of God that they are in reality, and since no one thing in creation is superior or inferior to any other thing, Pope's language throughout this Epistle is unmeaning. The final phrase of the couplet is bathos. God is not only the equal of all His works, He is immeasurably beyond them" (Elwin). But surely "equals," in this passage means 'makes equal.'

286. *Secure*. Used here in the sense in which we now use the shorter form of the same word, *sure*; having no doubt that you will be as blest. Its origin is Latin, *se* or *sine cura*. The earlier meaning was careless, not so much safe as careless, indifferent. Shakspeare, *Macbeth*, III. v. 32:

"And you all know *security*  
Is mortals chiefest enemy."

Ben Jonson has:

"Men may *securely* sin, but safely never."

Quarles:

"The way to be safe is not to be *secure*."

293. In the first edition this line ran:

"And spite of pride and in thy reason's spite."

Dr. Johnson says that Pope discovered "that the truth which subsisted in spite of reason could not be very clear."

## EPISTLE II.

1. *Know thyself*, Juvenal xi. 27, says:

E caelo descendit γυνῶθι σεαυτὸν.

The author of this oldest philosophic *dictum* is unknown, so it was attributed to Apollo. The Seven Sages met at Delphi, and

as the first fruits of their wisdom, they wrote on the Temple of Apollo, "Know thyself," and "Nothing in excess."

2. Often quoted, often misquoted.

5. *sceptic*. More properly it would be spelt 'skeptick.' From Greek *σκέπτομαι*, I look round, consider. A *sceptic* is one who doubts, and ought to be distinguished from an unbeliever, who has made up his mind.

6. *Stoic's*. A school of ancient philosophers, founded by Zeno. The name is derived from *στοὰ ποικίλη*, painted porch, the place where the founder taught. The passage below (101-110) gives the ordinary view of the Stoics. They believed that the passions were only given to be crushed, and this passionless state they called *Apathy* (ἀ, not; πάθος, passion). It may be doubted whether the Stoics intended their "apathy" to be so complete as Pope describes it, or meant more than that man should keep himself free from the mastery of passion. Certainly, the Stoics, especially those of the later Roman Commonwealth, and to the days of Marcus Aurelius, lived very noble lives, by no means deserving the epithet "lazy" of l. 101. The Epicureans are generally contrasted with the Stoics. The teaching of Epicurus was, "Follow nature; pleasure is the highest good." By nature, he meant the higher nature of man; by pleasure, the pleasures of intellect and "contemplation of Diviner things." But his followers corrupted a doctrine that was true by transferring it to lower pleasures. Their motto became, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Horace describes sensualists as "*Epicuri de grege porci*," 'Pigs from Epicurus' sty'; and the English word 'epicure' simply means 'one fond of good eating.'

8. *god or beast*. ἢ θηριον ἢ θεός. Aristotle, *Ethics*, VII. i. 2.

14. *abus'd*, here used in an obsolete sense, deceived. The French *abuser* means to deceive. Bacon, *Natural History*, No. 126: "The world hath been much *abused* by the opinion of making gold. The work itself I judge to be possible; but the means hitherto propounded are, in the practice, full of error."

16. *Great lord*, etc. *Pensées de Pascal*, Art. xxii: "Quelle chimère est-ce donc que l'homme? Quelle nouveauté, quel monstre, quel chaos, quel sujet de contradiction, quel prodige! Juge de toutes choses, imbécile ver de terre, dépositaire du vrai, cloaque d'incertitude et d'erreur, gloire et rebut de l'univers."

20. So Tennyson, *Locksley Hall* (near end):

"Rift the hills and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the sun."

Horace, *Odes*, I. xxviii. 4:

"Nec quicquam tibi prodest  
Æreas tentasse domos, animoque rotundum  
Percurrisse polum, morituro."

**22. Correct old Time.** An allusion to the Reform of the Calendar amongst Continental nations, which was not introduced into England until 1752, when eleven days were slipped out in the month of November, greatly to the indignation of the ignorant, whose cry was "give us back our eleven days."

**23. Plato.** An eminent Greek philosopher, a disciple of Socrates. Most of what we know about the teaching of Socrates comes to us through the Dialogues of Plato. In these Socrates is the chief speaker, and the writer seems to efface himself, never putting forward his own views, but making all that he has to say proceed from the mouth of his master Socrates. In consequence very little is known about Plato himself, considering the influence that he has had on the thought of the world. The name Plato is a nickname, meaning "broad," and was given on account of his build—broad shoulders and chest. Attaching himself to Socrates when a youth of twenty, he remained with him until his master's death, a period of about eight years. The risk of persecution following the death of Socrates drove Plato from Athens, and he was nearly forty before he returned. During this interval he travelled widely, to places as far apart as Egypt and Sicily. To Sicily he was tempted yet again by a young king, who had succeeded to the throne and wished to make the influence of philosophy felt in the practical work of government. Plato died in the middle of the fourth century, B.C. The place at Athens where Plato taught was called the Academy, and is described as having a garden with shady avenues. Over the porch of his house stood the inscription, "Let no one ignorant of geometry enter." The best known of his Dialogues are the *Republic* and the *Apologia Socratis*. The former begins with an investigation into the ideal state, which introduces the question—what is the best education to produce the best citizen? and this involves a third question—what is virtue? The latter is a defence of Socrates. In Plato poetry and philosophy are most happily combined, and this union gives a charm to his writings which has won even the opponents of his views.

**empyrean.** Greek, *πῦρ*, fire; *ἐμπυρος*, fiery. The word is pronounced as a trisyllable, the second *e* having a *y* sound. In the *Paradise Lost* Milton uses the same word eleven times, always as adjective and with the same accent. He uses the substantive 'empyrean' (four syllables) five times, and 'empyrean' as adjective once only, viz., x. 321:

"The confines met of *empyrean* heav'n  
And of this world."

Tennyson on Milton (in *Alcaics*):

"Tower, as the deep domed *empyrean*  
Rings to the roar of an angel onset."



The empyreal sphere was the outermost of a set of spheres of which the ancients believed the earth to be the centre. These were seven according to Greek thinkers, nine according to mediæval theologians. According to Cicero (*Somnium Scipionis*), this sphere is inhabited by "that all powerful God who controls the other spheres." It is a question whether Plato's notion was quite the same, but he certainly believed that there were actual spheres of which the earth formed the centre, and that these revolved round the earth.

**24. first good.** The allusion is to Plato's *idéai*, perfect archetypes or patterns, of which all earthly qualities were imperfect representations. Plato held that these had a real existence somewhere, and were not mere abstractions of the mind.

**25. his follow'rs.** Generally called the Neo-Platonists. Of these new disciples of Plato, revivers, or rather adapters of his doctrine six centuries after his death, Plotinus was the most important. His date is the middle of the third century of the Christian era. It was said that he was ashamed of having a body, and would never mention his parents nor his native country. He would not allow an artist to take his portrait, saying that nature had veiled us in an image, and it would be foolish to leave to posterity an image of an image. Plotinus was probably of Roman origin, perhaps son of a freedman, but born in Egypt. After many years' study of philosophy, his zeal to learn the philosophy of the Indians and Persians made him join a military expedition to the East. On his return from which, being then about forty years of age, he began to teach philosophy at Rome, where he soon acquired great influence. His doctrines are strongly tinged with Eastern mysticism, as for instance that to which Pope alludes in the next line, "and quitting sense call imitating God," "and call the quitting of sense an imitation of God," or more correctly a union with God. Plotinus taught that man must free himself from his nature by a process which he called ecstasy (literally, standing out of oneself), and that then man could grasp the Godhead by intuition. This may be fairly described as a 'mazy round.'

**27. eastern priests.** Some say the priests of Baal, the Sun-God; others say that Pope referred to the sacred dance of the Mahometan monks.

**34. Newton.** Sir Isaac Newton, the most distinguished mathematician and philosopher that the world has yet seen, was born on Christmas Day, 1642, at Woolsthorpe, near Grantham, in Lincolnshire. He was educated at the Grantham Grammar School, and afterwards at Trinity College, Cambridge, of which college he became a fellow. He died in London, 1727, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. With a remarkable genius

for mathematics, he had at the age of twenty-three made important discoveries about the movements of the planets and of comets. Subsequently, and while filling the chair of Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge, he discovered the prismatic colours of light, and established the law of gravitation, which accounts for the fall of an apple to the ground as well as for the equilibrium of the universe (*all nature's law*). Pope wrote an intended epitaph on Newton:

"Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night:  
God said, 'let Newton be,' and all was light."

Sir Isaac Newton was a member of the Convention Parliament, which seated William III. on the throne, and was afterwards Master of the Royal Mint, as well as President of the Royal Society. His great works are the *Treatise on Optics* and the *Principia*, the doctrines of which were very quickly accepted by the learned. Thomson, in the year 1727, wrote:

"Let comprehensive Newton speak thy fame  
In all philosophy."

Pope suggested that this should be expanded, and indeed wrote in the margin the lines which now stand.—*Summer*, l. 1560 (see Bell's edition):

"Let Newton, pure intelligence, whom God  
To mortals lent, to trace His boundless works  
From laws sublimely simple, speak thy (England's) fame  
In all philosophy."

Thomson also wrote an Elegy to the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton:

"Whether with angels thou  
Sittest in dread discourse or fellow-blest,  
Who joy to see the honour of their kind."

It will be observed that this is very different from Pope's idea of the superior beings, showing a Newton as men might show an ape, which is not very respectful to Newton. Men do not show an ape as 'admirable,' but as 'grotesque.'

44. *équipage*. A common idea about this word, and the cognate verb 'equip,' is that they are connected with the Latin *equus*, a horse. Even Milton is misled by the sound. He says:

"Chariots wing'd  
From the armoury of God, where stand of old  
Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodg'd  
Against a solemn day, *harnessed at hand*,  
*Celestial équipage*." *Paradise Lost*, vii. 199-203.

But the real derivation of the word is the French *équiper*, which is connected with some Teutonic word, which is practically an

old form of the English word 'ship.' Pope, *Rape of the Lock*, i. 45 :

"Think what an *equipage* thou hast in air,  
And view with scorn two pages and a chair."

Also, the *Spectator*, No. 10 : "I ... would earnestly advise them for their good to order this paper to be punctually served up, and to be looked upon as part of the tea *equipage*."

50. arts. Of all that out of which our vices have made arts. Of the arts created by man's vices, Gastronomy may be selected as an example.

58. Ascribe, i.e. we ascribe.

59. acts, for actuates, incites to action. Bishop Lowth in his *English Grammar* condemns this use. But there is plenty of early authority for the use of 'acts' as a transitive verb in this sense. It is now obsolete. Addison, *Spectator*, No. 285 : "The ancient criticks, who were *acted* by a spirit of candour." Barrow, *Sermons* : "Most men are greatly tainted with self-love ; some are wholly possessed and *acted* by it."

59-66. Self-love ... destroy'd. The image is taken from the works of a watch. Self-love is the mainspring, the motive power which makes the watch to go ; reason is the regulator which controls the motion, preventing it from being too quick or too slow. Without self-love man would not attend to any action ; without reason his action would not be directed towards a definite end. Without self-love man would be like a plant ; without reason, like a meteor. The whole passage is antithetical, and certainly halts in parts. Without self-love, would man even draw nutrition or propagate ? Again, self-love rather supplies the end, reason the means. Lastly, if, like a meteor, man flame through a real void, he would not meet anything to destroy.

72. Reason's. Reason is weaker as its objects lie at a distance and in prospect.

78. still, constantly.

81. schoolmen. Strictly *schoolmen* means the philosophic divines of the middle ages, who combined, in such manner as they best could, the teachings of ancient philosophy with the doctrines of the Latin Church. As philosophers they owed allegiance to Aristotle, whose logic they strained to the uttermost, in order by it to prove the truths of Christianity.

82. More studious to divide than to unite. Bacon, *Essay 50, Of Studies* : "If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences let him study the *schoole-men* ; for they are *cymini sectores*," i.e. splitters of cummin seed, one of the least of seeds. The poetic faculty sees resemblances : the philosophic faculty discerns differences.

98. *List*. This form is older than *enlist*, for their putting the names of soldiers on a list. Johnson gives "*List*, to enlist," but he does not give the verb "*enlist*" itself.

101. *Stoics*. See note on l. 6.

108. Reason the card, but passion is the gale. Reason is that by which we steer and guide our course; but without the motive power of passion, the wind upon the sails, the vessel would remain

"As idle as a painted ship  
Upon a painted ocean."

As to the actual meaning of the word '*card*' there is a slight difference of opinion. Does it mean the compass or the map? Dr. Johnson says, "the paper on which the winds are marked for the mariner's compass." So in Shakspeare, *Macbeth*, i. iii. 17:

"And the very ports they blow,  
All the quarters that they know  
I' the shipman's *card*."

Pope in a note on this passage wishes to read "points" instead of "ports." Spenser, II. vii. 1:

"As pilot well expert in perilous wave

Upon his *card* and compass firms his eye,  
The maisters of his long experiment,  
And to them does the steady helme apply  
Bidding his winged vessell fairely forward fly."

It would certainly seem from this passage that the *card* was different from the compass. In Bacon, Essay 18: "Let him carry with him also some *card* or book describing the country where he travelleth," the word must mean chart or rather map. By Johnson's time a chart was distinguished from a map, as it is in ours, by the fact that it represented only the coasts. Probably *card* in Pope's time meant either compass or a chart. The first sense fits this passage best. *Card* and *chart* have the same derivation, the Latin *carta*; French *charte*. The German *Karte* means a chart, a map, or a card.

109. Compare the thought in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, 96:

"And power was with him in the night,  
Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone,  
But in the darkness and the cloud."

110. Compare the famous passage in Addison's *Campaign*:

"Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm."

132. Aaron's serpent. See *Exodus*, vii. 11-12.      "

144. *peccant*. Derived from the Latin *pecco*, to sin. Meanings—(1.) Guilty, criminal:

“ From them I will not hide  
My judgments, how with mankind I proceed ;  
As how with *peccant* angels late they saw.”

*Paradise Lost*, xi. 70.

(2.) Chiefly used by medical writers. Ill-disposed, corrupt, offensive to the body:

“ With laxatives preserve your body sound,  
And purge the *peccant* humours that abound.”

Dryden, *The Cock and the Fox*, 166.

(3.) Also used in a legal sense, equivalent to informal.

148. As heav'n's blest beam turns vinegar more sour. This idea, as well as part of the passage immediately preceding, is taken from Bacon's *De Calore*. Wine, which has little body, or which contains little spirit, soon becomes sour on exposure to the air rather than to the sunshine.

150. *this* weak queen, reason.

159. *humours*, gout. Humour (Latin *humor*), literally moisture. The change that has come over the meaning of the word may be thus explained. According to ancient theories of medicine, man had within him four humours: black bile, yellow bile, blood and phlegm. The mixture of these was called his temperament, (Latin, *tempero*, mix.) The Greek was *συνχρᾶσις*, hence our *idiosyncrasy*. If the mixture was in good proportions the man was said to be good-tempered, or good-humoured. If one or other humour preponderated, then he was *melancholy*, sad (Greek *μέλας*, black, *χόλη*, bile,) or *atrabilious*, (Latin form with same meaning,) *choleric*, violent, (*χόλη*,) *sanguine*, hopeful, or *phlegmatic*, dull. Here, however, the word is used in its literal sense. By early theories of medicine, vital or life-giving humours (l. 139) were necessary to health, whereas disease was imputed to the presence in the body of some humour or liquid that ought not to be there. The doctor's business was to drive out such humour. Gout is believed to be derived from the Latin *gutta*, a drop, through the French, on the fanciful theory, which Pope apparently adopts, that the disease is caused by an aggravation of the humours. So rheumatism is derived from the Greek *ῥέω*, I flow. Cp. Sir William Temple: “He denied himself nothing that he had a mind to eat or drink, which gave him a body full of humours, and made his fits of the gout frequent and violent.” *The Spectator*, No. 115: “Labour or exercise ferments the humours, casts them into their proper channels, throws off redundancies.”

a gout. We say *the*. In Pope's time they said ‘an asthma.’

166. *sev'ral*. *Several* is connected with the verb *sever*, which is from the Latin *separo*, through the French *sevrer*, which language has also the verb *séparer*, just as the English has *separate*. *Se* means apart. The word *several* has the following meanings: (1) Different; (2) Particular, special; (3) Appropriate; (4) Disjoined. The meaning here is respective or distinct. So Coleridge, on *Cologne*:

"I counted two-and-seventy stenchies,  
All well-defined and *several* stinks."

Shakspeare, *Julius Cæsar*, III. ii. 247:

"Here is the will, and under Cæsar's seal:  
To every Roman citizen he gives,  
To every *several* man, seventy-five drachmas."

177. *mercury*, that is, quicksilver. It expands when heated at a uniform rate, and is, therefore, used in the thermometer.

189. *strainers*. The image is from the clearing of a liquid, *e.g.* in decanting wine, preventing sediment passing into the decanter. *Spectator*, No. 115. "I consider the body as a system of tubes and glands, or to use a more rustic phrase, a bundle of pipes and *strainers*." What meaning has "strained" in the famous line in the *Merchant of Venice*? (IV. i. 177):

"The quality of mercy is not *strained*."

197. *byas*, *sc.* *bias*. Pope's spelling is very unusual. The word properly means a weight lodged on one side of a bowl, which causes it to curve from the straight line. By a metaphor taken from the game of bowls, it is used to mean anything that gives a special direction, for instance, to opinions. *Dunciad*, I. 170:

"Like *bias* to the bowl,  
Which, as more pond'rous, made its aim more true,  
Obliquely waddling to the mark in view."

Shakspeare dwells on the illustration, *King John*, II. i. 279;

"Commodity, the *bias* of the world  
The world, who of itself is peised well,  
Made to run even upon even ground;  
Till this advantage, this vile-drawing *bias*,  
This sway of motion, this Commodity,  
Makes it take head from all indifferency,  
From all direction, purpose, course, intent."

Derivation—French, *biais*, slanting. This Brachet and Littré explain as from Latin *bifacem*, looking two ways; but the *New Eng. Dict.* says that this is rejected by later Romanic scholars as phonetically untenable, and that the origin is still unknown.

198. *Nero*. A name of infamy amongst the Roman Emperors. His reign began well. Only seventeen, with great personal

advantages, manly beauty, talents, graces, he submitted during his first years to the moderate counsels of the philosopher Seneca. But chiefly through the bad influence of his wicked mother, he fell into ways of licentiousness and vice. He himself descended to the stage to contend with professional singers. He is said to have set the city of Rome on fire for his own amusement. He set on foot a terrible persecution of the Christians. So great were his cruelties that a revolution ensued, headed by the soldier noble Galba. Every one deserted Nero, and he at length committed suicide. At his death he was only thirty and a half, yet, though he was generally hated, it was noticed that flowers were placed upon his urn. "Pity, the violets on the tyrant's grave."

**Titus.** A good Roman Emperor, the tenth son of Vespasian. His father, when made emperor, was engaged in the Jewish War; and Titus, who had already served with distinction in Britain and Germany, took his place in command of the Roman army. He distinguished himself as a general in the famous siege of Jerusalem, A.D. 70. The Arch of Titus at Rome commemorates the destruction of Jerusalem; on it are represented various Jewish emblems, like the seven-branched candlestick. Titus was for a time joint emperor with his father, and, later, succeeded him in the government. He governed well. He was ever ready to pardon, and desiring, as he said, to keep his hands free from blood, he took upon himself a priestly office. He did his best to bring happiness to his people, and on account of his virtues was called the "delight of the human race." "Recollecting at supper that he had not in the whole course of the day conferred any favour on any one, he uttered these memorable and justly commended words, *"Perdidi diem,"* 'I have lost a day' " (Suetonius, *Life of Titus*, chap. viii.).

**200. Decius.** P. Decius Mus, a plebeian consul, who devoted himself for his country's good at the battle of Vesuvius in the great Latin War. It was declared that the side would win which lost its general, and Decius rushed alone upon the ranks of the Latins.

**Curtius**, see *Dunciad*, i. 209: .

"Shall I, like Curtius, desperate in my zeal,  
O'er head and ears plunge for the commonweal?"

"The legend of the devotion of Mettus Curtius, is one of the most romantic of its kind. Possibly a flood, or a tempest, or an earthquake may have caused the formation of a deep pool or rift in the Forum; but in the imagination of the people this opening became a gulf, formed by no human power, and which no human power could avail to fill up. The gods required the sacrifice of the best. Gold and jewels and precious things were in vain cast in; at last a noble youth leapt with his horse full armed into the chasm, and the gods were satisfied, for what better offering has a

state to give than the life of her noblest and her bravest? It can be shown, indeed, that the story is confused with another, not more genuine, of a much earlier date; but if the fact was false, the idea at least was true, and will never cease to bear fruit from generation to generation" (Merivale, *General History of Rome*, p. 66).

224. *Zembla*, Russian. *Novaia Semlia*, two islands in the north of Russia, desolate in the extreme, and with few permanent inhabitants. Notice, that in the English language a *b* is added to strengthen the word, as in *tremble*, from Latin *tremulus*.

268. *sot*. Connected with French and provincial German words that mean a *fool*. This was the primary meaning of the word. Shakspeare, *King Lear*, iv. ii. 8:

"Of the loyal service of his son  
When I informed him, he called me *sot*,  
And told me I had turned the wrong side out."

*Sot* was subsequently applied to a person stupified with drink. This is its modern sense. It was also used both as a verb transitive and as a verb neuter. Of this usage, the participle *besotted* is the only trace retained in modern English. We may note that *sot* is in no way cognate with *sodden*, with which word it is sometimes confounded.

269. The starving chemist in his golden views Supremely blest. 'Chemist' is here employed in the old sense of 'alchemist.' According to modern English use, the word 'chemist' has two senses—the man who is conversant with the science of chemistry, and the man who dispenses and sells drugs. Americans distinguish by calling the latter a druggist. An alchemist was one who sought to discover a method by which the baser metals could be transmuted or turned into gold. In the Middle Ages many men devoted their lives to this search, called also the search for the Philosopher's Stone. Of course they could not find it; but in the search they came upon many valuable discoveries, which formed the beginnings of the science of chemistry. Shakspeare, *King John*, III. i. 99:

"To solemnize this day, the glorious sun  
Stays in his course, and plays the *alchymist*,  
Turning with splendour of his precious eye  
The meagre cloddy earth to glittering gold."

The derivation of the root is most uncertain. The *al* in 'alchemy' is certainly Arabic; and it is well known that much knowledge came into Europe in the earlier part of the Middle Ages through the Arabs in Spain, as *algebra*, for instance. The termination is Greek, *χυμός*, juice. Chemistry being regarded as ἡ χυμική (τέχνη), 'the infusory art' (N. E. D.), the spelling used



until quite recent times might be chymist or chemist. The latter gradually became the accepted form. The French for the science curiously enough is *chimie*.

279. *scarfs*. "Scarf, in the sense of a badge of honour, was in Pope's day appropriated to doctors of divinity. *The Spectator*, No. 21, compares bishops, deans, and archdeacons to generals; doctors of divinity, and all that wear *scarves*, to field-officers; and the rest of the clergy to subalterns. *Id.*, No. 609, complains of its promiscuous use by young divines after their first degree at the university, who wish to pass themselves off as doctors of divinity" (Pattison). It is interesting to note the different plurals. Pope says 'scarfs'; Addison, 'scarves.'

*garters*, the insignia of the famous order of knighthood, instituted by Edward III. Its motto is, "Honi soit qui mal y pense."

280. *beads*. Derived from the Anglo-Saxon *bead*, a prayer; hence small balls of glass strung on a thread by means of which prayers were counted. They are still used for that purpose by Roman Catholics. The word 'bid' meant to pray before it meant to command. 'To bid beads' means 'to say prayers.' A bidding prayer is a special prayer used in some English towns for the mayor and corporation, or for the authorities of a university. I bid you God-speed, I bid you good-bye, mean I pray that God may speed you, that God may be with you. Tennyson, *Talking Oak*, stanza 12:

"Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,  
And numbered *bead*, and shrift,  
Bluff Harry broke into the spence  
And turned the cowls adrift."

Scott, *Marmion*, II. xvii. 9:

"When he, for cowl and *beads*, laid down  
The Saxon battle-axe and crown."

Byron, *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*, stanza 8:

"The Spaniard, when the lust of sway  
Had lost its quickening spell,  
Cast crowns for rosaries away,  
An empire for a cell;  
A strict accountant of his *beads*,  
A subtle disputant on creeds,  
His dotage trifled well."

Compare German *beten*, to pray; *bitten*, to ask; *bieten*, to offer, our 'bid' at auction.

## EPISTLE III.

4. *trim*. Here a noun. So in Milton, *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, 5 :

"Nature in awe to him  
Had doffed her gaudy *trim*."

'Trim' is also used as an adjective and as a verb. It is connected with an A.S. root meaning steady, in order. Hence the verb to trim meaning to 'balance a boat.' *Spectator*, No. 383: "My old friend after having seated himself and *trimmed* the boat with his coachman who ... always serves for ballast on these occasions." From this, also, is derived the sense of changing from side to side as when we say that a person *trims*, or that a politician is a *trimmer*. Trim, preserving the same idea, also means to cut smooth, to remove ragged edges. 2 *Samuel*, xix. 24: "Mephibosheth had neither dressed his feet nor *trimmed* his beard." From this meaning the sense of decoration in dress naturally follows. Shakspeare, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, iv. iv. 164 :

"Our youth got me to play the woman's part,  
And I was *trimmed* in Madame Julia's gown."

9. *plastic*, forming, moulding ; Greek, πλαστικός. *Dunciad*, i. 101 :

"So watchful Bruin forms, with *plastic* care,  
Each growing lump, and brings it to a bear."

The modern passive use of the word *plastic*, yielding to the mould, is not a correct use.

10. *The single atoms each to other tend*. Pope refers here to the doctrines held by ancient writers, as Democritus (born 460 B.C.), and Lucretius. Of these doctrines Professor Tyndall spoke as follows in the address which he delivered as President of the British Association for the advancement of Science at the Belfast Meeting in 1874: "It was felt that to construct the universe in idea, it was necessary to have some notion of its constituent parts ... Thought, no doubt, had long hovered about this doctrine before it attained the precision and completeness which it assumed in the mind of Democritus. ... The principles enunciated by Democritus reveal his uncompromising antagonism to those who deduced the phenomena of nature from the caprices of the gods. They are briefly these: (1) From nothing comes nothing. Nothing that exists can be destroyed. All changes are due to the combination and separation of molecules. (2) Nothing happens by chance. Every occurrence has its cause from which it follows by necessity. (3) The only existing things are the atoms and empty space ; all else is mere opinion. (4) The atoms are infinite in number, and infinitely various in form ; they strike

together, and the lateral motions and whirlings which then arise are the beginnings of worlds. (5) The varieties of all things depend upon the varieties of their atoms in number, size, and aggregation. (6) The soul consists of fine smooth round atoms like those of fire. These are the most mobile of all. They interpenetrate the whole body, and in their motions the phenomena of life arise. The first five propositions are a fair general statement of the atomic philosophy as now held. As regards the sixth, Democritus made his fine smooth atoms do duty for the nervous system, whose functions were then unknown. The atoms of Democritus are individually without sensation; they combine in obedience to mechanical laws; and not only organic forms, but the phenomena of sense and thought, are the result of their combination.

"That great enigma, 'the exquisite adaptation of one part of an organism to another part, and to the conditions of life,' more especially the construction of the human body, Democritus made no attempt to solve. Empedocles, a man of more fiery and poetic nature, introduced the notion of love and hate among the atoms to account for their combination and separation. Noticing this gap in the doctrine of Democritus, he struck in with the penetrating thought, linked, however, with some wild speculation, that it lay in the very nature of these combinations which were suited to their ends (in other words, in harmony with their environment), to maintain themselves, while unfit combinations, having no proper habitat, must rapidly disappear. Thus more than 2000 years ago the doctrine of the 'survival of the fittest,' which, in our day, not on the basis of vague conjecture, but of positive knowledge, has been raised to such extraordinary significance, had received at all events partial enunciation."

23. Compare Virgil's *Æneid*, vi. 726 :

"Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus  
Mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet."

30. lawn, from Celtic root, and connected with French *lande*, an open space, used with spelling *launde* by Chaucer in same sense, *Knights Tale*, 833.

33. the linnnet pours his throat. The female bird does not sing. Hence both Gray, *Ode to Spring* :

"The attic warbler pours her throat" ;

and Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iv. 603 :

"All but the wakeful nightingale  
She all night long her amorous descant sung,"

are incorrect. "Note the exquisite refinement by which 'to pour his note' is raised into 'pour his throat'; any harshness of the metaphor being subdued by the repetition of the idea in the next line, 'swell the note'" (Pattison).

46. Compare Gay's *Fables*, "The Man and the Flea":

"The snail looks round on flower and tree,  
 And cries, 'All these were made for me!'  
 'What dignity's in human nature?'  
 Says man, the most conceited creature,  
 As from a cliff he casts his eye,  
 And view'd the sea and arched sky.  
 The sun was sunk beneath the main;  
 The moon and all the starry train  
 Hung the vast vault of Heaven: the man  
 His contemplation thus began:—  
 'When I beheld this glorious show,  
 And the wide watery world below,  
 The scaly people of the main,  
 The beasts that range the wood or plain,  
 The wing'd inhabitants of air,  
 The day, the night, the various year,  
 And know all these by Heaven design'd  
 As gifts to pleasure human kind,  
 I cannot raise my worth too high;  
 Of what vast consequence am I?'  
 'Not of the importance you suppose,'  
 (Replies a flea upon his nose);  
 Be humble, learn thyself to scan;  
 Know, pride was never made for man.  
 'Tis vanity that swells thy mind.  
 What Heaven and earth for thee design'd!  
 For thee, made only for our need,  
 That more important Fleas might feed.'"

## 50. Let it be granted that man is the intellectual lord.

56. *Philomela*, classical name for nightingale. The story was that *Philomela*, daughter of *Pandion*, King of *Attica*, was turned into a nightingale.

68. *favour'd man*. Several of the ancients, and many of the Orientals since, esteemed those who were struck by lightning as sacred persons, and the particular favourites of heaven (*Pope*). This is wrong as regards the opinion of the ancients. The Greeks at any rate regarded lightning as the instrument of the wrath of *Jove*. Without the note one might have fancied that *Pope* meant favoured as not seeing the stroke or feeling the pain. *Thomson*, *Summer*, 1169, speaking of a thunderstorm:

"Guilt hears appall'd, with deeply troubled thought;  
 And yet, not always on the guilty head  
 Descends the fated flash."

*Pope* wrote two epitaphs on a pair of lovers struck dead by

lightning at Stanton Harcourt, in Oxfordshire. In each there is the same idea :

(1)

"When Eastern lovers feed the fun'ral fire,  
On the same pile the faithful pair expire :  
Here pitying Heav'n that virtue mutual found,  
And blasted both that it might neither wound.  
Hearts so sincere th' Almighty saw well pleas'd,  
Sent His own lightning and the victims seiz'd."

(2)

"Think not by rig'rous judgment seiz'd,  
A pair so faithful could expire ;  
Victims so pure Heav'n saw well pleas'd,  
And snatch'd them in celestial fire."

touch ethereal. So Milton, *Sams. Ag.*, 549 :

"With touch ethereal of Heav'n's fiery rod."

72. knowledge of its end. Compare i. 77.

84. Hardly the writing of a very orthodox Catholic.

86. prest. On first reading of this and following lines it looks as if this word were the participle of verb 'press.' There is a proverb, "one volunteer is worth three *pressed* men." In the prolonged wars between England and France at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, when there was a scarcity of sailors on board the ships of war, press-gangs were sent out in the seaports to seize the sailors of merchant vessels and fishermen and compel them to serve. Pope, however, wrote at a time long before these terrible press-gangs : and it is more likely that the word is derived from *prest* money, earnest-money, like the shilling which the sergeant gives to the recruit. *Præstare tributum* is good Latin for "pay toll"

97. raise, count superior, extol. Pope even uses it as "praise." *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, 211 :

"While wits and Templars ev'ry sentence raise,  
And wonder with a foolish face of praise."

98. Reason is God's gift as well as instinct.

99. nations. Thomson, in the *Seasons*, is very fond of speaking of birds, beasts, fishes, flowers, or insects as *nations*, people, race, or tribe. So *Prov.* xxx. 25-6, "The ants are a *people*, not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; the conies are but a feeble *folk*, yet make they their houses in the rocks."

104. De Moivre. Abraham De Moivre, an eminent French mathematician, born in the province of Champagne, in 1667. He was a French Protestant, and when the Revocation of the

Edict of Nantes (1685) made it no longer possible for Protestants to enjoy liberty of worship, or even personal safety, in their native land, De Moivre took shelter in London, where he obtained his living by teaching mathematics, and by answers to questions relating to chances and annuities. His chief book is a treatise on the Doctrine of Chances. A famous modern writer on mathematics, Isaac Todhunter, said of him: "De Moivre was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1697. His portrait, strikingly conspicuous among those of the great chiefs of science, may be seen in the collection which adorns the walls of the apartments used for the meetings of the society. It is recorded that Newton himself, in the later years of his life, used to reply to inquirers respecting mathematics in these words: 'Go to Mr. De Moivre, he knows these things better than I do.' In the long list of men ennobled by genius, virtue, and misfortune, who have found an asylum in England, it would be difficult to name one who has conferred more honour on his adopted country than De Moivre."—Todhunter, *Theory of Probability*, chapter ix.

Todhunter also quotes the following interesting passage from a contemporary letter to Leibnitz, written in 1710: "Dominus Moyvræus, insignis certe Geometra, qui haud dubie adhuc haeret Londini, luctans, ut audio, cum fame et miseria quas ut depellat, victum quotidianum ex informationibus adolescentum petere cogitur. O duram sortem hominis! et parum aptam ad excitanda ingenia nobilia; quis non tandem succumberet sub tam iniquæ fortunæ vexationibus? Vel quodnam ingenium etiam fervidissimum non algeat tandem? Miror certe Moyvræum tantis angustiis pressum ea tamen adhuc præstare quæ præstat."

105. Who bid the stork, Columbus like, explore? Milton, *Paradise Lost*, vii. 423-430:

" There the eagle and the stork  
On cliffs and cedar tops their eyries build :  
Part loosely wing the region, part more wise,  
In common, rang'd in figure wedge their way,  
Intelligent of seasons, and set forth  
Their airy caravan, high over seas  
Flying, and over lands with mutual wing  
Easing their flight."

Only about twelve species are known of the family *ciconidae*. Most of these are migratory, and one of them, at least, the common stork of Europe, periodically performs very extensive journeys. Storks frequent marshy places, and feed on eels, reptiles, young birds, and other mammals. Throughout the East, and also in several parts of Europe, the stork is protected by law, and the destruction even of its eggs is punished by

a heavy fine. This is partly because of its usefulness as a scavenger, and partly because of the reputation which the bird has long enjoyed for its affection for its young. The stork is mentioned, *Psalms*, civ. 16-17, and *Jeremiah*, viii. 7. The stork resorts year after year to the same place, and when it has once fixed on a locality for its nest, that place will be assuredly occupied when the breeding season comes round. Thus, says the Rev. J. G. Wood (*Bible Animals*, p. 481), "The same home is kept up by successive generations of storks, much as among men one ancestral mansion is inhabited by members of the same family."

*bid.* Here preterite, more commonly "bade."

108. *phalanx*. A body of men drawn up for battle in the deep and compact manner of the Macedonians under Philip and his successors.

112. *mutual, reciprocal*. What A feels or does for B, and B for A. The common expression, "Our mutual friend," though sanctioned by Dickens, who wrote a book with that title, is incorrect. It should be our common friend.

125. *attend*. Here a transitive verb. It is more commonly followed by preposition "to."

127. *wander earth, wander over earth*. The whole line is in the absolute construction.

148. *state of nature*. The eighteenth century was fond of talking about the 'state of nature.' J. J. Rousseau won great applause by the doctrine that the passage from barbarism to civilization was not a gain to the world. "God made the country, and man made the town." Yet if God put into man instincts that lead him to gregariousness and to civilization, then civilization and town-life may be in accordance with nature, as much as being without clothes.

149. *Self-love and social at her birth began*. Self-love and social love began at the birth of nature.

154. *murder*. Thomson, *Spring*, 358.

"But you, ye flocks,  
What have ye done? ye peaceful people, what,  
To merit death? you who have given us milk  
In luscious streams, and lent us your own coat  
Against the Winter's cold?"

Shelley, in his *Revolt of Islam*, makes his people feed on fruits, not on slain animals:

"Gore nor poison none  
This festal kind pollute."

Thomson and Pope, for the purpose of poetical ornament, not from real conviction, maintain the vegetarian theory, supported

in ancient times by the honoured name of Pythagoras, that man ought not to eat the flesh of animals. Thomson, curiously enough, drew the line at fish. In Gay's fable, *Pythagoras and the Clown*, the argument is set out.

"The Clown, with surly voice replies,  
 'Vengeance aloud for justice cries.  
 This kite, by daily rapine fed,  
 My hens' annoy, my turkeys' dread,  
 At length his forfeit life hath paid;  
 See on the walls his wings display'd.  
 Here nail'd, a terror to his kind,  
 My fowls shall future safety find;  
 My yard the thriving poultry feed,  
 And my barns' refuse fat the breed.'  
 'Friend,' says the sage, 'the doom is wise:  
 For public good the murderer dies:  
 But if these tyrants of the air  
 Demand a sentence so severe,  
 Think how the glutton, man, devours,  
 What bloody feasts regale his hours:  
 O impudence of power and might,  
 Thus to condemn a hawk or kite,  
 When thou, perhaps, carnivorous sinner,  
 Hadst pullets yesterday for dinner.'  
 'Hold,' cried the clown, with passion heated,  
 'Shall kites and men alike be treated?  
 When Heaven the world with creatures stored,  
 Man was ordained their sovereign lord.'  
 'Thus tyrants boast,' the sage replied,  
 'Whose murders spring from power and pride.  
 Own then this manlike kite is slain  
 Thy greater luxury to sustain.'"

160. *prerogatives*, peculiar or exclusive rights. The word *prerogative*, which is the Latin, *prærogativa* (asked first), was applied as a title to the tribe which had the right of giving its vote before the others—an important privilege, considering how often human actions resemble sheep going through a gap, or the schoolboy game of "Follow my leader."

174. *physic*. Here in our modern sense, medicine. Greek, *φύσις*, nature. *Physics*, the study of nature. *Physic*, medicine, is that which puts nature right.

177. *Learn of the little nautilus to sail*. The Rev. J. G. Wood states (*Nature Teachings*, chap. 1.) that "there is just as much likelihood of seeing a mermaid curl her hair as of witnessing a nautilus under sail." He goes on to tell us that the creature which does sail is the *velella*, a kind of jelly-fish, which is fur-



nished with a sort of skeleton consisting of two thin horny plates, arranged so as to suggest the idea of a raft propelled by a sail.

183. *polities*. A modern would say *polities*, which form is nearer the Greek *πολιτεία*.

186. *anarchy*. Here used in its literal sense of absence of government, without the connotation of lawlessness now generally conveyed by that word.

193. There is an old proverb, "Summum jus, summa injuria." There are cases in which the insisting upon strictly legal rights is a positive moral wrong. Cicero quotes it, *De Officiis*, I. x.

197. *instinct*. See Darwin, *Descent of Man*, Part I., chaps. ii. and iii.

231. *steady*. The allusion is to the rays of light broken by a prism. Mr. Ward quotes from Bacon's *Instauratio Magna*: "For however men may amuse themselves, and admire, or almost adore the mind, it is certain that, like an irregular glass, it alters the rays of things by its figure and different intersections."

236. *right divine*. Allusion to the doctrine of the divine right of kings, the favourite doctrine of the extreme royalists of the seventeenth century. So *Dunciad*, iv. 188:

"The right divine of kings to govern wrong."

242. *enormous*. The two next lines explain the word. Out of all rule. Latin *e* and *norma*, rule. In this sense we generally now use 'abnormal.'

many made for one. So Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, I. x. 5: "At the first, it may be, that all was permitted unto their discretion which were to rule, till they saw that to live by one man's will became the cause of all men's misery. This constrained them to come unto laws."

256. *her*. Refers to 'superstition' (246).

260. And such as tyrants would believe in, because they are formed like tyrants. If English had case endings, 'formed' would be accusative.

265. *flamen*, a Latin word for a priest attached to the worship of a particular deity; probably, however, Pope used the word generally. The duty of the *flamen* was to keep the sacrifice alight. The word is connected with Latin *flare*, to blow.

Living means 'animal food.' Here, as in 157 ("The shrine with gore unstained"), Pope seems to hold the theory that the first sacrifices were bloodless, i.e. the fruits of the earth were offered.

266. Compare Milton, *Paradise Lost*, i. 392 :

“ First, Moloch, horrid king, besmear'd with blood  
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears ;  
Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud  
Their children's cries unheard, that past through fire  
To his grim idol.”

268. The image is derived from the old engines of war, such as the catapult, which threw stones. The Flamen made an engine of his god, and assailed his foes by threatening them with chastisement from heaven (Elwin).

286. *moral*. Here a noun meaning morals or morality. Cp. the French *morale*.

306. Guizot says : “ ‘ I prefer a bad action to a bad principle,’ says Rousseau, somewhere ; and Rousseau was right. A bad action may remain isolated ; a bad principle is always prolific, because, after all, it is the mind which governs, and man acts according to his thoughts much oftener than he himself imagines.”

#### EPISTLE IV.

3. *still*, in the old sense, ‘ ever, always.’ That something which is always prompting us to sigh. Notice Pope changes from a person to a thing.

4. *dare to die*, martyrdom in the hope of eternal happiness.

6. *O'erlook'd*, something overlooked and sometimes magnified in imagination both by the fool and by the wise.

7. *Plant*. Pope “ begins his address to Happiness after the manner of the ancient hymns by enumerating the titles and various places of abode of this goddess. He has undoubtedly personified her at the beginning, but seems to have dropped that idea in the seventh line, where the deity is suddenly transformed into a plant ; from thence this metaphor of a vegetable is carried on distinctly through the eleven succeeding lines, till he suddenly returns to consider Happiness again as a person, in the eighteenth line ” (Warton).

8. *mortal soil*. The epithet is important. Where amongst human beings ?

9. Are courtiers happy ? or are the wealthy ?

*shine*. This noun is used by Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton. Johnson in his *Dictionary* : “ It is a word, though not unanalogical, yet ungraceful, and little used.” Nobody, however, quarrels with it in composition—sunshine, moonshine.

10. **flaming.** Fault has been found with this epithet. Elwin says: "The line calls up a false idea of splendour, and not a vision of subterranean gloom and desolation." The epithet is characteristic of the classical school of poetry. No effort is made to be true to nature, but as the cut diamond *flames* in a lady's head-dress, so the mine that is full of diamonds must also flame.

11. **Is happiness due to literary or to military glory?**

12. **iron.** This is an essential epithet. Omit it and the harvests are ordinary harvests, and no longer battles. It is hypercritical to say that sickles as well as swords are made of iron.

13. **where grows!** Answering his own question of five lines before.

15. **sincere.** The origin of the word is doubtful, the usual explanation being from Latin *sine cera*, without wax. It is more likely that the first syllable is the same as that of 'single' (*singuli*), 'simple' (*simplex*), and the second may be *cernere*, to separate; or *serere*, to join. Pope does not here use the word in our modern sense of 'honest,' 'candid,' but in the older sense of 'pure,' 'unmingled,' without any moral meaning attached to it. Johnson quotes: "In English, I would have all Gallicisms avoided, that our tongue may be *sincere*, and that we may keep to our own language."

18. 'Happy as a king' is a proverbial saying, the truth of which Pope disputes. Bolingbroke was not a happy man, being "notoriously a prey to factious rancour and the pangs of disappointed ambition" (Elwin).

19. **blind;** or rather they differ in their views of happiness and of the way to attain it.

20. **As philanthropists or as hermits.**

21. **in action.** Epicureans. **in ease,** Stoics (Pope). It would have been better if the poet had not added these brief notes, for they are misleading. See note on these schools of philosophers at ii. 6. The Epicureans did not place happiness 'in action,' but rather the opposite; nor did the Stoics place it 'in ease,' but in ascetic virtue.

23. **in pain.** Epicureans (Pope).

24. **virtue vain.** Stoics (Pope).

26. **doubt of all.** Sceptics (Pope); that is, the philosophical sect so called, also known as Pyrrhonists, after their founder Pyrrho.

28. **happiness is happiness.** Pope has sacrificed truth to epigram. "The Stoics and Sceptics placed the supreme good in unconditional virtue, and the Epicureans taught the precise doctrine of Pope himself, that pleasure is the goal, and virtue the road" (Elwin).

29. mad opinion, fancied happiness, fashion; what we now call conventionality.

31. her goods, nature's blessings.

34. common sense. "(1) An internal sense which was regarded as the common bond or centre of the five senses.—*Obs.* (2) The endowment of natural intelligence possessed by rational beings; the plain wisdom which is every man's inheritance. (This is 'common sense' at its minimum, without which a man is foolish or insane.) More emphatically: good, sound practical sense; combined tact and readiness in dealing with the everyday affairs of life. 'There is not,' said a shrewd wag, 'a more uncommon thing in the world than common sense. ... By common sense we usually and justly understand the faculty to discern one thing from another, and the ordinary ability to keep ourselves from being imposed upon by gross contradictions, palpable inconsistencies, and unmasked imposture. By a man of common sense we mean one who knows, as we say, chalk from cheese'" (*New Eng. Dict.*). The quotation is from a book published eight years before this Epistle of the *Essay on Man*.

37. What we justly call happiness.

40. "The image is drawn from a person leaning towards another, and listening to what he says" (Elwin).

kind, *sc.* mankind, the species as opposed to the "individuals" of the previous line. 'Kind' and 'kin' are connected. Compare Hamlet's famous play on the words:

"A little more than kin, and less than kind" (i. ii. 65).

42. Even the hermit in his cave is not satisfied with his own approval, but seeks the admiration of others.

49. Order is heav'n's first law. One of the aphorisms in the *Essay on Man* most frequently quoted.

52. shocks, clashes with, goes against; the proper meaning of to 'shock,' shake violently.

56. This is the key. ἐκ τῶν διαφερόντων καλλίστη ἁρμονία. In 63, 4, Pope says that if all had the same gifts there would be discord, not harmony.

57. Condition, circumstance, rank and wealth.

59. In who. Notice the omitted antecedent.

66. externals, what Aristotle calls τὰ ἔκτος ἀγαθὰ.

70. in hope, the poor and humble, in hope to rise.

in fear, the rich and powerful lest they should fall. "The exemplification of this truth by a view of the equality of happiness in the several particular stations of life, was designed for the subject of a future epistle" (Pope). This future epistle, it may be added, was never written. Had Pope attempted it, he

would hardly have kept up the idea that the happiness of one class is maintained by hope, whilst that of a class more fortunate in this world's goods is tempered by fear. Perhaps he would rather have adopted the line of argument of Burns in the *Two Dogs*.

73. *risë*. "He had in his mind Virgil's description, borrowed from Homer, of the attempt made by the giants in their war against the gods, to scale the heavens by heaping Ossa upon Pelion, and Olympus upon Ossa. Pope took the expressions 'sons of earth,' and 'mountains piled on mountains,' from Dryden's translation, *Georg.* i. 374" (Elwin). The passage in Homer is *Odyssey*, xi. 315, and in Virgil, *Georg.* i. 281.

75. *still*. Notice the repetition. The reference is to *Psalms*, ii. 4.

78. *mere mankind*, mere (Lat. *merus*, pure) means only; to men simply as men.

81. *temperance* (Lat. *temperantia*, moderation, self-control), not in Pope's day limited to moderation in the use of intoxicating drink, though no doubt including that.

84. *these*, *sc.* the bad, the latter.

*worse*, in a worse way, by worse means.

86. *that*, antecedent 'those' omitted.

92. *want*, do without.

*to pass for good*; the height of wickedness, *to have all the advantages of vice and a reputation for virtue*.

94. *Who fancy*. Antecedent omitted.

*bliss to vice*, *sc.* allotted, assigned.

97. But it is the fool who calls the good, and only the good, unhappy, when an accident happens to a good man that might have happened to any man.

99. *Falkland*. Lucius Cary, Lord Falkland, was one of the finest spirits in the Long Parliament. A true patriot, at first he was in favour of the reforms proposed; but when the war broke out he drew his sword on behalf of the king, but was miserably unhappy because of the Civil War. Sitting among his friends after a long silence, he would, "with a shrill and sad accent, ingeminate the word, 'Peace, peace,'" and say "that the very agony of the war, and the view of the calamities and desolation the kingdom did and must endure, took his sleep from him, and would shortly break his heart." At the first battle of Newbury he fell. On the morning of the battle he dressed with unusual care, saying, "he was weary of his country's misery, and believed he should be out of it before night." It was his friend, Edward

Hyde, afterwards Earl of Clarendon, who wrote of him, "A loss which no time will suffer to be forgotten, and no success or good fortune could repair." It should be remembered that Falkland was only thirty-three when he was killed.

100. **Turenne.** Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne (1611-1675), a great French general, first during the last period of the Thirty Years' War, then under Louis XIV. in various wars of aggression. Why does Pope call him "god-like"? He takes the view of the French eulogies written amid the consternation caused by his death. Also Turenne, at the age of fifty-seven, was converted to the Roman Catholic religion, Pope's religion. "Turenne's fame rests on his military achievements; as a man he was not more distinguished for his virtues than the Duke of Marlborough, whom in many respects he resembled. He had, indeed, the calmness of all philosophic, cold-minded temperaments, but few other praiseworthy qualities" (H. Morse Stephens in the *Encycl. Brit.*).

101. **Sidney**, Sir Philip, courtier, ambassador, poet, romancist, critic, soldier; born at Penshurst in Kent, had his Christian name after King Philip, then lately married to Queen Mary. He died, aged nearly thirty-two, from wounds received at Zutphen. Elizabeth called him "the jewel of her times." He was offered the crown of Poland. He lives in literature as the friend of Spenser, through his sonnets, *Astrophel and Stella*, and through his prose writings, *The Arcadia*, and *An Apologie for Poetrie* (afterwards labelled "The Defence of Poesy").

104. **Digby.** The Hon. Robert Digby, son of Lord Digby, who died, aged 40, in 1726, eight years before the publication of this Epistle. Pope wrote his epitaph in the Church of Sherborne, Dorsetshire:

- "Go! fair example of untainted youth,  
Of modest wisdom, and pacific truth:  
Compos'd in sufferings, and in joy sedate,  
Good without noise, without pretension great.  
Just of thy word, in ev'ry thought sincere,  
• Who knew no wish but what the world might hear.  
Of softest manners, unaffected mind,  
Lover of peace, and friend of human kind:  
Go live! for Heav'n's eternal year is thine,  
Go, and exalt thy moral to divine."

The sire, Lord Digby, was seventy-four when this poem was published, and lived eighteen years longer.

107. **Marseilles' good bishop.** The plague raged at Marseilles from May, 1720, for twelve months, ending thirteen years before the publication of this Epistle. M. de Belsunce was the bishop who displayed great courage and devotion.

108. When nature, etc. "This is a verse of a marvellous comprehension and expressiveness. The direfulness of this pestilence is more emphatically set forth in these few words than in forty such odes as Sprat's on the plague at Athens" (Warton).

110. *a parent.* Pope's mother died in June, 1733. She was then ninety-one.

112. Nature deviating from its course produces physical evil; the wandering of the will produces moral evil.

114. That which is evil to a part is for the good of the whole, or else change admits evil, or else nature permits it to occur; but the last case seldom happened until man interfered. The "improved" is ironical.

120. When the disease was inherited from his vicious father.

121. *th' Eternal Cause*, God.

123. *sage.* The allusion is to him

who, to be deem'd  
A god, leap'd fondly into *Ætna* flames,  
Empedocles. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iii. 470.

It would seem, however, as if this legend were somehow confused with the story of Pliny, the naturalist, who, during an eruption, approached too close to Vesuvius. Pope had originally written:

"T' explore Vesuvius if great Pliny aims,  
Shall the loud mountain call back all its flames?"

126. *Bethel.* Hugh Bethel, a Yorkshire country gentleman and a friend of Pope's. He suffered badly from asthma, which is much aggravated by sea-sickness. He lived for fourteen years after this compliment to his blamelessness.

128. *you.* Bolingbroke, to whom the epistle is addressed, not Bethel, of whom the poet has used "thy" two lines previous.

130. *Chartres.* Col. Francis Chartres, a man infamous for all manner of vices, who had died three years earlier. Pope's friend, Dr. Arbuthnot, wrote an epitaph on him which begins:

HERE CONTINUETH TO ROT  
THE BODY OF FRANCIS CHARTRES,  
WHO, WITH AN INFLEXIBLE CONSTANCY  
AND INIMITABLE UNIFORMITY OF LIFE,  
PERSISTED,  
IN SPITE OF AGE AND INFIRMITIES,  
IN THE PRACTICE OF EVERY HUMAN VICE,  
EXCEPTING PRODIGALITY AND HYPOCRISY:  
HIS INSATIABLE AVARICE EXEMPTED HIM FROM THE FIRST,  
HIS MATCHLESS IMPUDENCE FROM THE SECOND.

137. Calvin (1509-64), one of the leading Reformers.

140. Undue compression has given an unsatisfactory line. If Calvin feel heaven's blessing, the party of his followers cries that there is a God: his opponents that there is none. If he feel heaven's rod, the cries are reversed.

146. made for Cæsar. A quotation from Addison's *Cato* which, though first produced twenty-one years before, still held the stage.

"This world was made for Cæsar" (v. i.).

Titus. See note ii. 198.

147. who chain'd his country, Julius Cæsar.

151. That, *sc.* bread.

152. knave, originally like German *knabe*, boy, a servant. Here its modern meaning, villain, bad man.

154. As a sailor in the Royal Navy or as a pearl-diver.

161. external, *sc.* rewards.

for internal, *sc.* merits.

171. a gown. This may refer to the gown of a University degree, or, as in 197, to the preacher's gown.

172. its great cure, a crown. "This sarcasm was directed against George II. When Prince of Wales he quarrelled with his father and patronized the opposition. On his accession to the throne (1727) he abandoned the opposition to which Pope's friends belonged, and retained the ministers of George I." (especially Sir Robert Walpole).—Elwin. "Johnson, after justly censuring him (Pope) for having 'nursed in his mind a foolish disesteem of kings,' tells us, 'yet a little regard shown him by the Prince of Wales (*sc.* Frederick, son of George II.) melted his obduracy; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his royal highness how he could love a prince when he disliked kings?' The answer which Pope made was, 'The young lion is harmless, and even playful, but when his claws are full grown he becomes cruel, dreadful, and mischievous'" (Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, vol. viii., p. 19).

175. boy and man, *sc.* the conjunction of the two; that is why the verb is in the singular.

an, *sc.* one.

177. Indian, *sc.* North American Indian. Compare Ep. i., 99-112, especially for *dog*, the last line.

192. wants, *sc.* has not got.

194. Act well your part. This couplet, and especially these four words, is a common quotation.

there, *sc.* in acting the part well.



196. *flaunts, flutters*. Johnson said these words might with more propriety have changed their places: to which answer was made that the interchange of terms aggravated the satire. The reader must judge for himself whether the objection holds. It is easy, to see that flutter properly goes with "rags" and flaunt with the stiff "brocade."

brocade, lit. "bossed stuff," from the Spanish. A textile fabric woven with a pattern of raised figures, originally in gold or silver; in later use, any kind of stuff richly wrought or flowered with a raised pattern (N. E. D.).

199. *cowl*. Classical Latin *cucullus* means the hood of a cloak; but the cowl is a garment with a hood worn by monks, not the hood only. It has the permanent characteristic of covering the head and shoulders, and being without sleeves" (see N. E. D.). *Cowl* is often used for the monk. Cp. Tennyson, *Talking Oak*, 12:

"Bluff Harry broke into the spence  
And turned the *cowls* adrift."

*Cowl* used to be pronounced *cool*.

201. *acts the monk*. "He alluded to Philip V. of Spain, who resigned his crown to his son, Jan. 10th, 1724, and retired to a monastery (like his great predecessor, Charles V.). The son died in August, and on September 5, 1724, Philip re-ascended the throne. Weak-minded, hard-hearted, superstitious, and melancholy-mad, he was a just instance of a man who owed all his consideration to the trappings of royalty" (Elwin). It may be added this grandson of Louis XIV. was one of "the pair of louts," as Lord Peterborough called them, about whose right to the throne of Spain the "War of the Spanish Succession" was waged early in the century. Philip lived and reigned for a dozen years after this compliment was paid to him by Pope, and was only sixty-three when he died.

204. *prunella*. "*Prunello*, a kind of stuff of which the clergymen's gowns are made" (Johnson's *Dictionary*). He then quotes this passage with the spelling 'prunello.' Preaching in the surplice is now so common that it may be worth while to remark that in Pope's days, and for a century after, preachers always wore gowns. The name of the woollen stuff comes from its dark, sloe-like colour. Fr. *prunelle*, properly a diminutive of *prune*, a plum.

205. *strings, sc.* the ribbons of various orders. Fr. *cordon*. The use of the word is contemptuous.

206. *That*, here the demonstrative. The allusion is to the influence of the mistresses of George II., or perhaps of those of his father.

209. Not a false rhyme, but a French pronunciation, the expression being borrowed from Boileau, *Sat.* v. 85, 6:

“Et si leur sang tout pur, ainsi que leur noblesse,  
Est passé jusqu'à vous de Lucrèce en Lucrèce.”

Lucretia is taken as the type of the virtuous woman.

212. *since the flood.* Cp. Tennyson, *Aylmer's Field*, 381:

“These old pheasant-lords,  
These partridge-breeders of a thousand years,  
Who had mildewed in their thousands, doing nothing  
Since Egbert—why, the greater their disgrace!  
Fall back upon a name! rest, rot in that!  
Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler? fools,  
With such a vantage-ground for nobleness.”

216. *Howards*, a noble English family, of which the Duke of Norfolk is the head.

220. *Macedonia's madman*, Alexander the Great. Pope's view of Alexander of Macedon is not historical. He had noble ambitions; and the qualities with which he sought to fulfil his purpose were great. Cp. i. 160, “Young Ammon,” “to scourge mankind.” “Charles XII. deserved not to be joined with him. Charles XII. tore out the leaf in which Boileau had censured Alexander” (Warton). The *Swede* is of course Charles XII. See Johnson, *Vanity of Human Wishes*, 191-222. Charles had only been dead sixteen years, and Voltaire's *Histoire de Charles XII.* had been published only three. Everybody was reading the brilliant little book.

224. A line frequently condemned for its vulgarity.

225. *No less alike.* The politic are like each other, just as much as the heroes are the same (219).

226. *sly slow.* Cp. Shakspeare, *Richard II.* i. iii. 150:

“The sly slow hours shall not determinate  
The dateless limit of thy dear exile.”

The 2nd folio reads “flye slow,” and Pope in his edition of Shakspeare (1725) “fly-slow,” *sc.* that fly slowly, but the received reading is better.

*circumspective*, not a common word,—glancing round.

235. *Aurelius*, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Pius (A.D. 161-180), the purest and greatest of all the Roman emperors.

*reign, bleed.* “Bleed seems as improperly said of the death of Socrates (who died of drinking hemlock) as *reign* of Marcus Aurelius. The Romans down to a very late period were scrupulous in avoiding applying the terms *rex*, *regnare*, etc., to the emperors” (Pattison).

240. *my Lord*, Bolingbroke.

240. Tully, M. Tullius Cicero.

244. Eugene. "Eugenio von Savoye," as he used to sign himself—with an Italian Christian name, a German particle, and a French surname. He was Italian by origin, born and educated in France, and an Austrian general. He had offered his sword to Louis IV., who laughed at him and called him the little abbé. It will be remembered that Sir Roger de Coverley always called the general Prince Eugenio (*Spectator*, No. 269). He shared with Marlborough the glory of Blenheim, and after the conclusion of the War of the Spanish Succession by the Peace of Utrecht, won fresh laurels by beating the Turks. In the year when Pope wrote he was certainly *living*, and in the year of the publication of this Epistle commanded an Austrian army in the War of the Polish Succession, though in his 71st year. He died two years later, in 1736.

246. Rubicon, a small river separating Cisalpine Gaul from Italy. When Julius Cæsar crossed it with his army, he had left his own province (Gaul), and become an invader of Italy.

Rhine. Eugene was commanding an army on the Rhine when Pope wrote.

247. A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod. Two wholly different explanations have been given. Elwin's: "Wise men are light as feathers, a chief is a scourge of his kind." Pattison's: "A wit is his own quill pen, a chief is merely a field-marshal's bâton." The latter is probably right.

252. hung on high, as a criminal on a gibbet. Cf. Tennyson's *Rizpah*. The bodies used to poison the air. Elwin thinks the reference is specially to the treatment of the bodies of Cromwell and other regicides.

256. huzzas. Notice the pronunciation as if 'huzzays!'

257. Marcellus. M. Claudius Marcellus, a friend of Cicero's, was on Pompey's side and opposed to Cæsar. After that the battle of Pharsalia had decided the contest in favour of Cæsar, Marcellus retired to a kind of honourable exile in Mytilene, studying philosophy. Pope is said to have meant by Marcellus the Duke of Ormond, and by Cæsar, Sir Robert Walpole. Ormond was in exile. Shortly after the accession of George I., the leaders of the Tory party were impeached for their share in the Peace of Utrecht. Bolingbroke and Ormond fled. Harley, Earl of Oxford, stood his ground. The story goes that Ormond took leave of his colleague with the words, "Farewell, Oxford without a head," to which the reply came at once, "Farewell, Duke without a duchy." Pope here gives Ormond praise that he did not deserve, because Pope and his friend Bolingbroke naturally sympathized with Ormond in exile.

259. parts, abilities.

260. you, Bolingbroke.

261. how little, the teaching of Socrates. .

264. With no one to support you, and no one capable of valuing your efforts.

265. truths, the doctrines of the Patriot King.

267. Painful pre-eminence. A quotation from Addison's *Cato*, III. v. On the word 'pre-eminence,' see Matthew Arnold's *Lectures on Translating Homer*.

277. ribbons. The spelling 'riband' is because of a fancied connection with 'band.' The word is of Celtic origin.

278. Lord Umbra, or Sir Billy. Lord Shadow is probably not intended for any special person. 'Sir Billy' is William Yonge, at whom Pope gives many a shrewd thrust. He was made Knight of the Bath when the order was revived. "A man whose fluency and readiness of speech amounted to a fault, ... of whom Sir Robert Walpole said that nothing but Yonge's character would keep down his parts, and nothing but his parts support his character" (Lord Stanhope).

280. Gripus. There is no doubt that Pope meant the Duke of Marlborough, who had died a dozen years previously. Much of the passage that follows applies to Marlborough: *ambition* (285), *enormous fame* (307), *ruining kings* (289), betrayal of James II.; *betraying queens* (289), intrigue with Duchess of Cleveland; *Europe's laurels* (295), Blenheim, etc.; *plundered provinces* (298); *wealth ill fated* (299), Marlborough notorious for avarice; *imperial wife* (302), Duchess of Marlborough; *evening to the day* (306). Cp. Johnson, *Vanity of Human Wishes*, 317:

"From Marlborough's eyes the streams of dotage flow."

The attack was at first more direct. Line 286 originally stood

"In one man's fortune, mark and scorn them all."

But there is evidence that Pope took a present of £1000 from the Duchess of Marlborough to suppress the passage about herself in *Moral Essays*, ii., under the name of Atossa, as well as any attacks upon her husband. Then Pope altered this passage, and veiled its points with the words, "From ancient story." Mr. Courthope (Elwin and Courthope's edition, vol. iii., p. 87) gives an altered version of this passage with the attack on Marlborough restored. A page of the Essay, with corrections in Pope's handwriting, given in *facsimile* by Mr. Courthope, was found amongst Bishop Warburton's papers. Pope had probably corrected it as that of the earlier version stood, that Warburton might know what it was like. There is no evidence that Pope meant to publish it.

281. Bacon. Francis Bacon (1560-1626) often, but erroneously, called Lord Bacon, as by Pope in "The Design," p. 1. Lord

Verulam, Viscount St. Albans, were his titles. Pope's fondness for antithesis carries him much too far in calling Bacon the "meanest of mankind." It is of course "a vile antithesis." The charge of meanness rests on two matters, his treatment of Essex and venality as chancellor. In the former case he was not generous, but when acknowledging Essex's kindness he had expressly reserved his duty to the sovereign; in the latter, though undoubtedly wrong, he claimed that in delivering judgment he never was influenced by a bribe. Receiving presents from suitors was a bad custom of the time.

284. **Cromwell.** Pope takes the view of Cromwell that was common in his time. As a Roman Catholic he would naturally be disposed to be hostile to him, and to take the view adopted by Bossuet in his famous funeral oration on Henrietta of France, the Queen of Great Britain, viz., that Cromwell was a hypocrite and base. At the same time it must be remembered that between the death of Milton and the publication of Carlyle's work, *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, there were but few who did not hold that view.

292. **proud Venice.** When Pope wrote, Venice was still an independent republic, though the former splendour had gone. The poet ought not to have sneered at the humble origin of Venice.

303. **trophied arches,** arches covered with trophies of victory.

**storied halls.** Milton, *Il Pens.*, 159:

"And storied windows richly light,  
Casting a dim religious light."

Here it means that the halls are hung with tapestry or pictures that tell the stories of victory.

311. **stands still.** Probably the idea is of a sphere rotating on its axis, and the axis alone keeping still.

314. **Is blest,** etc. Shakspeare, *Merchant of Venice*, iv. i. 179:

"It is twice blest;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

314-8. Mr. J. B. Mayor quotes this passage as a specimen of Pope's incorrect style. "There is no subject to the verbs. What is it which is 'attended with no pain'? What is 'without satiety'? What is 'more distressed'? In the second line 'joy unequalled' is in the absolute construction; 'it' is merit; but we cannot speak of merit, scarcely of joy as 'attended with no pain'; the phrase is properly applicable only to 'loss,' understood from the verb 'lose' which precedes." Surely this is somewhat hypercritical, and of a piece with many of the comments made on Pope. This is the meaning, 'where alone merit receives constant reward and is twice

blessed.' The joy is unequalled, if merit receives its final reward, i.e. immortality, and if merit loses this reward and is annihilated, it is attended with, or suffers, no pain. Merit is free from satiety, however much it is blessed, and merit is really happier as it is distressed with the woes of others.

323. **Never elated.** Ruskin praised highly the sentiment of this and the following verse. Leslie Stephen said, "It is impressive, but it is quite impossible to discover by the rules of grammatical construction who is to be never elated and depressed." No one is to be. Pope says that merit is.

330. **The bad, the good, viz., the bad man, the good man.**

332. Almost a hackneyed quotation.

336. **But touches**, which does not touch.

347. **other kind**, the animal creation, other than mankind. The argument is that man has an instinct for immortality.

350. "His greatest virtue" is benevolence; "his greatest bliss," the hope of a happy eternity. Nature connects the two, for the bliss depends on the virtue.

364. This famous illustration was before used by Chaucer, *House of Fame*, ii. 280 :

" if that thou  
Throwe on water now a stoon,  
Wel wost thou, hit will make anoon  
A litel roundel as a cercle,  
Paraventure brood as a covercle ;  
And right anoon thou shalt see weel,  
That wheel wol cause another wheel,  
And that the thridde, and so forth, brother,  
Every cercle causing other  
Wyder than himselve was."

Pope had modernized this very poem of Chaucer's. In his version the passage is 436-441.

373. **my friend.** Bolingbroke.

378. It is a question whether Bolingbroke deserves this praise.

380. An often quoted line.

388. An unfulfilled prophecy.

391. **tuneful art**, poetry.

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